

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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RELATIVITY AND NEWTON.

Two centuries ago, Sir Issac Newton enunciated his laws of motion which are familiar to every student of physical science to day. They imply that 1° A body in a state of motion continues in a straight line unless compelled by impressed force to change its direction. 2° Change of motion is proportional to the impressed force and takes place in

the direction of the resultant. 3° To every action, there is always an equal and contrary reaction. These laws have appeared to us for the last 150 years to be unassailable. Our knowledge of things, our sense, our reason bore evidence to the truth of these statements and even at the present day our laws of dynamics are founded on the above

theories. They work so well as to leave no doubt in the mind of the average student that there can be no question as to their truth.

What is a Scientific Law ?

What is a scientific law is a question that may be well asked. Facts on certain subjects are gathered which, after all possible errors are corrected, form the basis of an hypothesis which ultimately may be accepted as a theory. When the theory has been established and found to be in harmony with all known facts it is summarized and a law is established. But however *successful* a law may become, directly it fails to interpret a new discovery it can no longer be accepted as an established one and must be discarded for a new one which squares with the newly discovered facts. It follows that in Science any law however well established is of necessity a temporary one on account of the possibility of new discoveries which may modify or cause the old law to be discarded. It does not, however, follow that because a law is discarded for a new one that it was untrue. What really happens is that the new supplements the old and remedies what was lacking in it.

Newton's Laws and New Discoveries.

We may now return to the subject of Newton's laws of motion and examine them in the light of modern discoveries and see if they have the same value or significance today as they had only a few years back. When Newton, in the light of facts known in his time, formulated his theory, the world was just emerging from the darkness of the

Middle Ages, and Science was still in infancy. That Newton, with the means at his disposal, was able to generalize theories into laws makes one wonder at his genius. The Atomic Theory in his day, although it was guessed at by a few, was absolutely unknown and it took a hundred years of researches to discover it. Light was known, in the time of Newton, to travel by a velocity of 186,000 miles per second, but what Light was, nobody knew, though Newton himself, made advanced researches on the subject and reached some conclusions which are embodied in his Emission Theory. That theory was accepted for a long time as quite satisfactory to account for all the then known facts regarding the phenomena of Light except aberration and refraction which did not fit in. Today, we know that it is precisely on the question of aberration and refraction that the Theory of Emission has been abandoned, and although other theories such as those of Huyghens and Hertz have also failed, it is but just to remember that Newton's theory was not altogether wrong. We know now that Light is not formed by corpuscles thrown out in a straight line from its source as was supposed by Newton, nor is it in accordance with the theory of Huyghens, namely, an undulatory one but neither of these theories are entirely wrong. They are both right up to a certain point for, today we have evidence that Light is composed of "Quantas" of energy which throw out waves in all directions. Newton, himself, probably would have been surprised to see how, after all, his theory based on a wrong premise had come so near the truth. The reason why Newton could not carry his investigation further was, doubtless, due to the fact that electricity in his time was hard-

ly understood and it was not until well into the nineteenth century that Oersted and later Faraday and others made us acquainted with the phenomena of Electricity and Magnetism as we know them today. The nineteenth century opened for us a new era of science. The Atomic Theory reduced Chaos into Order and enabled a host of workers to go further in the field of chemical researches. Oersted, Ampere, Ohm, Faraday, and others gave us precise information on electricity and magnetism which enabled workers in mechanics to perfect electrical machines and later on the engineering world was able to conduct those delicate and complicated machines which enabled scientists to make deep researches and thus made it possible for new discoveries to come to light. The Sciences that profited mostly by these new discoveries were especially biology, physics, chemistry, and astrophysics. As a snowball rolling downhill gathers more snow during its journey, scientific knowledge by the impetus given to it by these pioneers gathered fresh facts in hundreds of laboratories all over the world, until Albert Einstein, in the year 1905, surprised the scientific world by the statement that Motion, Matter, Space and Time are only relative terms and that they have not the absolute values we attached to them and that Matter, especially, had a variable mass which is consequent on its velocity. His theories were so complex and difficult that few persons could understand them, but they gave the uncomfortable feeling that our laws of mechanics, founded by Newton, were not uncontrovertible facts and consequently the idea spread among unscientific people that Einstein had disproved Newton's laws of motion and gravitation. It is needless to remark

here that such a wrong impression about the so-called fallibility of science and the folly of relying implicitly on scientific theories as absolute truths was greatly disseminated by religious professors and others interested in the perpetuation of supernaturalistic ideas. These wrong ideas were greatly popularized by sensational newspapers and magazines, and although nothing can be further from the truth than these wild assertions regarding the untenability of Newton's theories, it will take time to correct the erroneous impression thus created. Newton's laws are as tangible and solid to day as they were a hundred years ago. The apple still falls at the same velocity towards the centre of Earth, the laws of action and reaction are still true, but (and it is a big but) as far only as ordinary velocities go. That is to say, as far as our senses go. In other words, as far as we have velocities which do not exceed 500 or 600 miles per second, Newton's laws are true for all practical purposes. When, however, we are dealing with velocities which approach that of light, then Newton's laws will not account for the phenomena observed. It is only in this sense that Einstein's Theory of Relativity supplements what was lacking in Newton's laws. Though for practical purposes Einstein's theory does not affect the cause of events—our aeroplanes, motor cars, trains, for instance, will probably never reach these velocities—one is nevertheless, anxious to know, what is the difference between Newton's laws and the theory of Einstein's and why they differ.

The Existence of Ether and State of Matter.

Newton's Laws of Motion presupposed the existence of "an intangible

something" which was called the "Ether of Space". This Ether was believed to permeate all space and matter in some inexplicable manner, and it is through that medium that the energy of action was thought to be propagated from the source to the object. The existence of that medium, called Ether, was thought to be essential to explain *action at a distance* and Newton, quite logically, thought that without that medium no action in interstellar spaces could be possible. As regards the state of matter although some advanced thinkers of the eighteenth centuries had a suspicion that it is not as solid as it appears, for the generality of mankind matter, as represented by the familiar objects one is acquainted with, was a continuum and there was no reason to think it otherwise than solid. As knowledge progressed it was gradually forced upon scientists that this notion is correct as far as the state of a material body appears to our senses. When, for instance, we feel a piece of marble, it is solid, but only as far as our sense of touching and seeing is concerned. Closer examination on a physical basis, crystallography for instance, will reveal that this apparent solid state is, in reality, composed of aggregates of atoms of different elements forming molecules of marble, and that between the atoms and molecules there are more empty spaces than solid stuff, and consequently one could truly say that ether permeates all solids. As this ether was believed to permeate the smallest particle of matter, one could imagine, it was only natural to conceive it as the all surrounding medium through which radiation, from any source in the universe, was carried to our senses and consciousness. Such being the case, it

was thought that matter in motion sails through this ether without disturbing it and as this planet is composed of matter and being in motion in an orbital movement round the sun, it must have a velocity in relation to ether. This was believed to be the cause of the aberration of light discovered by Bradley in the beginning of the eighteenth century, the nature of which must be explained in order to understand what follows.

Testing the existence of Ether.

When light from a star falls on the objective of a telescope, this light takes a certain time, however short, to travel from the objective to the eye of the observer; as the telescope is carried along by the motion of the earth during that time the ray of light which has entered the objective appears to have deviated from the axis of the instrument. In order to bring this ray of light on the cross threads, it is necessary to point the instrument in the direction of the relative velocity of the light to the Earth, that is to say, upon what is called the apparent position of the star. Now, this ought to give us a means of knowing the absolute velocity of the Earth in relation to the Ether as we know the velocity of light. To test this many experiments were made by the most skilful physicists with the most precise instruments available. The well known Michelson-Morley's experiment is one of these and it is considered to be the most convincing one. It has given a negative result as have all the rest. Michelson's experiment took place in 1881, and it was not until 1893 that Fitzgerald hit upon the explanation

which was also independently arrived at by Lorentz in 1895.*

Lorentz and Fitzgerald say that the reason is fundamental in nature. All matter moving at a high velocity is compressed in the direction of transposition whilst remaining the same in the vertical direction. We cannot detect this, for if we apply any instrument of measure it will be subjected to this distortion, even our eyes are so subjected and consequently it is impossible to detect it. But as the Michelson-Morley's experiment was made with light as a measuring standard, it ought to have detected the relative velocity of the Earth. It was not so detected and they say that as Time itself is subjected to this law so are clocks subjected to this deformation which is a fundamental law of nature. The fact is that no velocity in the universe can be more than the velocity of light; any great velocity may come as near it as possible but does not surpass it.

The Theory of Relativity explains the cause.

This must be explained as it may be argued that this observation has nothing to do with the Michelson-Morley's experiment. The object of that experiment was to test the theory that the Earth, in moving round the sun sails, so to speak, in an Ocean of Ether, and if this was correct it would be possible to find out the speed with which the Earth moves in that medium. If the Earth follows one direction when moving on one side of its orbit, this

direction must necessarily be reversed when it is moving on the other side. It is like going with and against the current. Therefore, if light from a star was the objective for the verification of that theory, the experiment, repeated six months after, ought to have provided the necessary data to give a definite result. The experiment, as we know, was negative, and Lorentz and Fitzgerald, as already stated, explained why it was so. All the same, the explanation of these two scientists about the failure of the Michelson-Morley's experiment threw no light on the cause of this fundamental law of Nature. It was left to Albert Einstein to explain this satisfactorily which he did in his Theory of Relativity. By the mathematical demonstration of his theory, one is able to see clearly, when he clashes with Newton. One, however, must not forget that Newton dealt with Earth's dynamics and gravitation while Einstein dealt with velocities undreamt up till recently. One of the conclusions of the Theory of Relativity is that matter increases in mass with its velocity until it becomes infinite when the velocity of light is reached. If this premise is true (this has been verified by hundreds of the most skilful physicists) the second law of Newton cannot be true. This law, in effect, says that motion is proportional to the force applied and follows the direction of the resultant. This would mean, for instance, that if we could develop sufficient power to enable an aeroplane to reach the velocity of light, and if two such

*It may, however, be remarked here that quite recently Professor Miller of the University of Ohio, using Professor Michelson's instrument, claimed to have discovered the existence of the Ether which Professor Michelson is reported to have said to be quite correct. Ed. Reason.

aeroplanes were to approach each other from opposite directions, to an observer at rest on Earth the relative velocities of these two aeroplanes would appear to be twice the velocity of light which would be impossible.

Let us now consider the third law of Newton, namely, that to every action there is an equal and contrary reaction. Suppose an electron A is disturbed by some means or other, the electron will radiate energy through the Ether and after some time this energy will meet another electron, say B, which will react to the action of A. But unless electron B is completely absorbent the reaction will not be complete, and as there must be always a lapse of time however infinitesimal between the action and re-action this is actually what happens. If the energy after leaving A strays in interstellar space without meeting another particle upon which it can act, the reaction never occurs at all.

In Newton's time the material world was so tangible that the mind could not conceive of such things as electrons wandering in space. Today, however, we are forced to the conclusion that it is not only possible but it is impossible that it can be otherwise. Therefore, Newton's third law suffers the fate of the second law. It now remains for us to consider Newton's first law in the light of Einstein's theory. Geometry in Newton's time was Euclidian; the geometry of Space had not been thought of; that Space was curved was probably never thought of. Einstein's mathematical deductions have forced on us the belief that Space is curved. This is demonstrated in this manner:—A body in motion cannot continue in a straight line though this is apparently so. When we go to Space it

must be clear that the orbital movement of bodies is not caused by the attraction of the Sun at all but that these circular or elliptical movements are the result of a different cause. No attraction is necessary to force planets around the sun; it is the natural outcome of the fundamental fact that space, itself, is curved and that the planet has no other path to follow but a curved one. If a ray of light was sent from this planet and if movement was suddenly stopped, after many light years this ray of light would reappear at the spot from which it was emitted on Earth. It is difficult for the unscientific mind to grasp this, and to many this may appear as mere speculation. But calculations by such eminent physicists like Einstein, De Sitter, the Jesuit Father Lemaitre, and others leave no doubt that such is the case. On departure an observer travelling with the ray of light would imagine he was travelling in a straight line from the source because he would have no means of knowing any other form of motion, but to another observer at the centre of the Universe this ray of light would travel in a vast circle as large as the boundaries of the universe and eventually would come back to the point of departure. Thus, for us on Earth we have no means of knowing that we are travelling in a straight line, but to an observer in the Sun this would be apparent. That we are able to discover a circular motion is due to the fact that we observe motions in relation to other bodies outside our own motion. Now regarding an electron in an atom of hydrogen, the same argument holds good. It moves around the hydrogen proton because it has no other alternative. For an observer on that electron it is moving in a straight line, but to us we see the elec-

tron moving at a tremendous velocity around the hydrogen proton. There is no force holding this electron in its orbit; it is a natural outcome of its orbital velocity. If it is further away the velocity is reduced, if closer, it is increased. This is the reason which keeps it in the orbit in which it is revolving. Its mass increases with its velocity and the centrifugal force prevents it falling into the positive proton. Let a radiation fall on the electron when it is in any position in the orbit, this radiation will be absorbed and it will jump to a longer orbit, but its angular velocity will decrease in proportion to the radius of the orbit in such a way that the centrifugal force will now just balance the positive attraction of the proton and it will continue revolving in the new orbit without apparent

effort until some new condition will force it to go to a different orbit. Newton's first law again fails to satisfy the necessary conditions of modern knowledge. Long before Einstein propounded his theory, the difficulties of Newton's laws of motion were recognized in the world of physics. Einstein has supplemented what was lacking in Newton's laws. Einstein's theory, however, is based on abstract thoughts, which do not affect our material life, while Newton's laws are solely concerned with us as we are, without any regard for such things as the immensity of Space, and the possible existence of other Universes, Planck's Quantum theory, or Bohr's Law of Quanta in the electronic world.

CAPTAIN E. TERNEI.

[Captain Ternal is a direct descendant of the scientist Ternel of Paris who first measured the meridian from Paris to Amiens. ED. REASON.]

THE HUMANIST MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

Rationalists of India will recognize elements kindred to their own outlook in the Humanist movement in America. And this in spite of differing backgrounds. American Humanism is a rapidly developing point of view, arising concurrently at diverse points in answer to the needs of the time and the growing integration of scientific knowledge to social life. If there is a difference between Rationalism, as it is generally understood in the United States, and Humanism, it is that Rationalism is traditionally a movement which took its rise in the nineteenth

century and bears to-day the marks of its origin. It has been conditioned by the mechanism of the century. It has been chiefly concerned with the necessary but negative task of destroying the outworn superstitions of supernatural religion. But the rationalist may not necessarily have carried reason over into the field of everyday human affairs and endeavoured to provide in place of the destroyed beliefs, a constructive answer to the need for a faith to live by.

Humanism is a twentieth century movement. Although it has forerunners

and antecedents going far back in history, it now builds upon the organic rather than the mechanistic view of the world. Aligned with the pragmatism of John Dewey, the Evolutionary Naturalism of Roy Wood Sellars, and frankly naturalistic throughout, we find that many philosophic positions emerge at Humanism religiously. The factor common to many philosophic viewpoints traces back to Francis Bacon, who held in his "Reconstruction of Philosophy" that scientific study should be carried on "in order that the human estate might be enhanced."

It is this faith that by the use of science as a technique of the good life, humanity can make secure and satisfying its existence on earth, that often leads people appropriately to call the Humanist movement "Scientific Humanism." This designation is especially fortunate because of the need sharply to distinguish between what we here call Humanism and the so-called Humanism of a group of literary critics led by Irving Babbitt of Harvard University. That group of *litterateurs*, by its stubborn opposition to naturalistic philosophies, by its callous indifference to all movements of social reform, and by its antipathy to science and the by-products of science in every phase, has shown itself to be out of step and out of sympathy with Scientific Humanism.

It is worthy of note, moreover, that most of the Humanist leaders in America do not wish to have formed a cult or "ism" of their philosophy. "You might just as well try to organize Absolute Idealism or Critical Realism" is their general attitude toward giving the organization institutional expression.

The movement began, in its contemporary expression, perhaps twenty years ago as an arm-chair affair in the Universities and Theological Schools where the implications, for the life of society, of scientific research most readily became apparent. The modern world-view upset the background of the revealed religions. The study of comparative religions shook the smug provincialism of the Christian and brought greater tolerance. The critical study of the Bible destroyed the old Protestant authority, as did the study of Christian origins destroy the Papal claims. The study of psychology and sociology brought the conception of a separable soul under fatal scrutiny. Finally the war stirred the young thinkers to a new social consciousness which demanded that war be ended and human values made secure through man's own efforts. Beneath the entire orientation of the Humanist is the basic faith that human life in the here and now is supremely worth while, and can be made happier through the use of organized intelligence. When the orthodox religious conceptions were uprooted, Humanism came to replace them with this positive faith in man and life.

Among the earliest of Unitarian ministers to champion the Humanist faith were John Dietrich and Dean Curtis W. Reese. Mr. Dietrich is the Minister of the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis and preaches regularly on Sunday mornings to a congregation of fifteen hundred or more persons. In a nearby town, Willmar, another group meets and hears the same talk by radio. Over the air Mr. Dietrich reaches far and wide through the middle north-west states. His talks are published and go to every state and many countries.

Dr. Reese, a somewhat younger man, had championed the doctrine before serving as Secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference. In that position he gave leadership for a period of ten years to a growing number of young ministers who had caught the spark from the universities. As the editor of "Humanist Sermons," a collection of addresses by eighteen Unitarian ministers or others who have appeared in Unitarian churches, and as the author of two compact handbooks on Humanist Religion this scholarly man has given much intellectual stimulus and guidance to the men who are in liberal pulpits.

It is safe to say that there are now well over fifty ministers in Unitarian, Universalist and other pulpits who are frankly humanistic; many more are obviously humanistic in their leanings. Many of them state frankly that they are agnostic as to the existence of a God and that they are interested in the present world rather than in any possible hereafter.

The movement is not confined, however, to the larger Universities and to the manifestly liberal churches. Students have filtered out to the smaller colleges and to journalistic positions. It is still difficult for a young man trained in the religious sciences to find a position in his own field, and often the appointments consist of mere living in some other department than Religion and the student gives expression to his views through writing.

An increasing number of Jewish Rabbis also give adherence to Humanism. This is not surprising when it is recalled that Judaism has always been to a large degree a faith of this life. The spirit of prophets has made a lasting contribution to the social outlook of the modern Hu-

manist. The change in rabbinical leadership, where it has gone over to Humanism, is largely a shift from biblical authority to the authority of scientific evidence, and to faith in science as a technique of social reform.

With such antecedents it is quite natural that the American Humanist is not anti-church. He is against a great deal of what religion and what goes on in many churches. But he seeks to introduce a broader conception of religion and to humanize the uses of the church. The definition of religion which is most widely accepted by Humanists is that by Professor A. E. Haydon of the University of Chicago, who defines religion is "the co-operative quest for the good life." This definition seems to be justified by the findings of the religious sciences and to include all religions. Alfred Loisy of the *College de France* similarly defines religion as "the group pursuit of the ideal." These two men, both profound students of religion and imbued with the scientific temper, command respect and confidence because of the method they use. That method, briefly, is to eliminate personal bias and to let the facts speak for themselves. Under these definitions of religion the church becomes for the Humanist a place for fellowship, for education, and for co-operation in service. Feeling that the church at large is faced with a choice between a rapid decline, or perpetuation with outworn and hence antisocial functions, the Humanist ministers hope to salvage the great endowments of the church by diverting them to useful functions.

The humanizing of the church is not limited to those who have rejected theism or the language of Christology. The modernist movement in Protestant Chri-

stianity is one which endeavours to read new wine into old bottles. While retaining old symbols and words, it reads into them a humanistic content. As might be expected, most modernist churches go further toward Humanism in their practice than in their profession. Accordingly, in addition to those who are frankly agnostic in their outlook, there are also many "Evangelical" or "Theistic" or "Christian" Humanists who still use the old supernatural verbiage but use it as a sanction for the same programmes for human betterment that the Humanist champions.

So marked has been this trend toward Humanism that a celebrated theologian recently called upon the modernists and fundamentalists to "forget their differences and unite against Humanism, the common scourge of Christendom." Only the fact that the Humanist point of view is making inroads, not only in the free churches, but in the orthodox households of faith, could have brought forth this appeal.

As another instance of a growing recognition of the movement, we might mention the action of "The Christian Century," a modernist publication, in inviting Professor Max C. Otto of Wisconsin to defend the Humanist side of the question of the existence of God. In a debate lasting many weeks Professor Otto upheld the thesis that there *ought not* to be a God.

A growing literature has accompanied the rise of the movement. Besides the books by Dr. Reese, including his splendid book "Humanist Religion" published in 1931, we might mention the following: "The Quest of the Ages" by A. E. Haydon; "Things and Ideals" by Max C. Otto; "The Quest for

Certainty" by John Dewey; "Religion Coming of Age" by R. W. Sellars; "The Twilight of Christianity" by Harry Elmer Barnes; "A Preface to Morals" by Walter Lippmann; and "My World" by Arthur E. Morgan.

Such a list should also include "Religion without Revelation" by Julian Huxley, which reminds us that the movement is by no means confined to America, and Rationalists will recognize, F. J. Gould, J. B. Coates and other members of the R. P. A. of London as champions of the doctrine.

The movement has no official publication but an autonomous journal "The New Humanist" receives the support of most of its leaders and reflects the growing philosophy in a highly critical and creative way. This journal is published at 14 West First Street, Dayton Ohio, U. S. A.

The recently formed Humanist Extension Bureau, with offices at 1526 Harmon Place, Minneapolis, Minnesota, fills a need for aggressive efforts to spread the literature of the movement and to organize lectures throughout the country. The Bureau has Mr. Dietrich as its chairman and numbers on its Advisory Board the more prominent leaders, professorial, lay and ministerial, throughout the country.

A few groups have been organized bearing the Humanist label, namely that led by T. C. Abel, at Hollywood, California, and that led by Dr. C. F. Potter, New York City. Most of the leaders, however, maintain their old denominational affiliations, holding rightly that their position is a logical and natural development of elements native to their traditional associations and doctrines.

Often the Humanist ministers achieve the difficult task of ministering to a very mixed congregation, with many who retain their theistic ideas and other-worldly attitudes.

Apparently the only thing that can stop the spread of Humanism in America is for some overzealous advocates to try to institutionalize it and prematurely to frame its principles into rigid dogmas so that growth with the changing times is no longer possible. The movement should take a lesson from the experience of the Positivism of Auguste Comte, in which a philosophy bearing in it enduring elements was borne under to obscurity because it could not change with the times. Positivism went down with the trivialities of a peculiar but rigid form of worship, and with the incidents of philosophy, notably Cartesianism, which passed with its century.

Humanism, in America or anywhere else, contains elements that need not rise or fall with any passing mode of assembly or pattern of philosophy. It is based upon the primacy and value of human life, and the power of man

through organized intelligence to achieve the good life. Such a faith in man does not mean self-worship. It is not just the individual or his immediate neighbor that call for devotion. It is the whole race and its cosmic setting and earthly possibilities that command faith. It is Humanity as the ideals and culture of yesterday and to-day, and the possibilities of present and future generations for fulfillment within the limits and potentialities of a world of law and order that the Humanist finds worthy of faith.

To the extent that Rationalists have made the step forward to a constructive programme for human betterment they are also Humanists. To the extent that Humanists recognize that there is still superstition and outworn dogma to destroy they are also Rationalists. Undoubtedly the two movements overlap. In many cases the only difference is one of differing labels and background. They should make common cause.

EDWIN H. WILSON.

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"The New Humanist."

FREEMASONRY.

4. Hindu and Mahommedan Parallels.

An intelligent Hindu or Mahommedan would have no difficulty in understanding the deepest philosophy of Freemasonry. The ordinary ignorant Freemason, on being told this, denies it; says it is impossible for anyone to understand Freemasonry unless initiated into a lodge

approved by the Grand Lodge of England. It is very difficult to convince him that his secrets are cheap and elementary. When convinced that atleast his secrets are shared by others, he takes another line: he says it only goes to prove how universal and how right his principles

are. Really, of course, it only goes to show how universal is the human capacity for self-imposition.

The caste-marks of the Hindus take the same form and have the same significance as masonic signs. Members of the Royal Arch may be sometimes observed wearing a charm consisting of a double triangle within a circle. This is the sign of the Trinity in Unity, the "true secret" of a Master Mason. Hindus know the sign. The trinity is not, of course, the Christian trinity, and this ultimate Pantheistic Deity is not the Christain Jaweh. The upright triangle of Shiva, the inverted triangle of Vishnu, the triangle with circle of Brahma, are all masonic tokens, and stand for similar aspects of the Deity. The upright caste-mark of the Preserver becomes, in masonic symbolism, two upright pillars. The symbolism is, of course, Phallic. The character of Shive as the Great Leveller becomes parallel horizontal lines in Freemasonry. The reversed swastika of Kali has a similar dread in freemasonry.

A simple dot is the mark of the Supreme Being. In the centre of a circle it means the Unknown and Unknowable, the Infinite, the All-Pervading, from whom all emanate and to which all ultimately return, the point at which all secrets shall be discovered.

In a craft lodge, the three principal officers personate the three principle figures of the Hindu pantheon in an amusingly close manner. The Worshipful Master has his place in the East, and represents the rising sun. He is God Almighty (in spite of the fact that in ordinary life he is a watery-eyed clerk with drooping moustaches), wielding the

gavel or Tau, a phallic symbol of creation and authority. He is, in fact, Brahma the Creator and Overlord, who made all things and rules all things. He made all things, including himself, out of Brahm the Unknowable.

The Senior Warden has his place in the West, and represents the setting sun. He is Shiva the Destroyer, who closes the life of every man. He carries the running noose of death. He closes the Lodge, he is the Ender of Time, and one day will close the Grand Lodge of the World, which is roofed with the canopy of Heaven.

The Junior Warden, in the South, is the sun in its preservative aspect. This stodgy-looking person is none other than Vishnu. He calls the brothers from labour to refreshment. He helps and safeguards them in their journeys and dangers. He gives the light which lights them on their way.

The rank-and-file mason carries on this unconscious parallelism. His three degrees take him through the same three aspects of the Deity, but he is not sufficiently versed in mysticism to know it. As an Entered Apprentice he is reminded of his entrance into life, out of darkness. He is taught to call upon the Great Architect of the Universe, i. e. Brahma. As a Fellow Craft, he is instructed how to preserve spiritual and physical life. He has to invoke the Great Guardian of the Universe, the Grand Geometrician who defines the limitations of man. This is certainly the god that Hindus call Vishnu.

As a Master Mason, he learns that the Secrets which he has been seeking are lost. He goes on his arduous journey from East to West in search of them,

but in the end has to come back with substitute secrets, for he is unable to pass by the West and reach the Centre of All Things. The West is guarded by Death, by the Senior Warden, by a gentleman in a masonic apron who is none other than our old friend Shiva. This time he does not call upon the gods he invoked on the previous occasions. This time he names the objects of his futile journey, the Brahm, the Infinite, the Unlimited, the Most High God. He does not find him. No one every does, anywhere.

Readers must not imagine from this parallel that Freemasonry is an adaptation of Hindu philosophy. The same sort of pantheistic conception is to be found everywhere in mystery-cults, whether Aztec, Dionysian, or what-not. The number of mystical ideas upon which mystery-inventors can draw is limited, the number of ritualistic ideas is also limited, and they have all been tried. It is impossible to work up a really new religion. So all religious founders draw on the same old material. Hence the family likeness.

The serpent, the Hindu typification of Divine Wisdom, is to be found on the buckles of the apron of a Master Mason. It does not appear on the vestments of the lower degrees, as these have not yet achieved whatever wisdom is obtainable in a masonic lodge.

The Royal Arch Degree teaches the "true secrets" of a Master Mason. In the Royal Arch, the candidate is dead. He has passed by the West, the valley of darkness and death guarded by Shiva the Destroyer. He is brought up alive out of the grave, and, passing through the crown of the vault, is in the presence of the source of all life. He is no longer dealing with the three persons of the

trinity encountered in the craft degrees: he is now in the presence of Brahm the Infinite. Hence the three officers are no longer separate in their places east, south, and west. They sit together; they are three in one. This, however, is not necessarily understood by the person undergoing the antics.

The statues of most Indian gods are nearly all shown in attitudes and making signs that are signs of a Royal Arch mason. The words, signs, and grips of the inner rites of Shiva correspond very closely to the words, signs, and grips of Royal Arch. This is one of the examples of a direct borrowing of Freemasonry from Hinduisim. The man who elaborated the Royal Arch was Thomas Dunckerley, an illegitimate son of George II, who resided in Calcutta for several years. When, about 1760, the Antient masons started a Royal Arch degree, it was Dunckerley who spied out the particulars and made a Royal Arch degree for the Accepted masons. Like all the degree-makers, Dunckerley added improvements of his own, including the Shivaite signs and tokens he had learned during his stay in Calcutta.

The secret societies on the fringe of Mohammedanism are very similar to masonic societies. In a previous article we have already paralleled the lower order of the Dervishes with the lower orders of Freemasons. The higher Dervish orders are similarly parallel. One of the higher mysteries of the Freemasons is the mystery of the cross and the rose: in Verdishism this is the mystery of the cross and the crescent. A "cross-and-rose" mystery occurs in all secret rites, ancient and modern. The cross is the emblem of the male organ of virility, the rose the female organ. The male emblem may be

modified as a T-shaped or L-shaped sign; the female emblem may be disguised as a crescent, lozenge, or what-not: the significance is always the same. All mystic signs, from the most downright to the most spiritualised, are adaptations, modifications, and combinations of these two signs.

Dervishism has an inner "Brotherhood of the Builders of the Kaaby". This is remarkably similar to the Masonic Royal Arch, except that the three chief officers are Abraham, Ismael, and Isaac. The Mavlevi dervishes recognise each other by the secret "Lion Grip". The same grip is used by Master Masons for mutual recognition.

The Druses of Syria are the modern representatives of the Assassins, an ancient heretical Moslem sect. The young males of the sect undergo an initiation similar to the Craft Degrees of Freemasonry, while the priests practise an Inner Mystery resembling the masonic Royal Arch. The passwords of the Druses are identical with a number of masonic passwords, and both derive from the same source—the Jewish Kabbala. The inner and outer guard to the meeting-places of the Druses are disposed in exactly the same way as the masonic "tylers". The Grand Sign of the Druses is the double triangle (the "Shield of David" from the Kabbala) and their mystical lore is centred around the Seven Planets. The Druses share with the Freemasons, Oddfellows, Buffaloes (and almost everybody else) the exclusive Grand Principles of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.

The Islamic Allah or the Jewish Jaweh are strictly monotheistic deities. They are gods on the old anthropomorphic lines; persons, creators, judges. The

deity of Freemasonry is something utterly foreign to Jaweh or Allah, yet such was the confusion and ignorance of the founders of freemasonry that they borrowed great masses of incompatible material from Jaweh-worship and grafted it on to their pantheistic cult, chiefly from the Kabbala. The Cabbalistic legends surrounding Solomon and his temple were a perfect mine for the founders of freemasonry. The masonic passwords are Hebrew, borrowed from the Cabbala, and Cabbalistic rules are observed on reading them backwards. This characteristic delight in childlike codes and secrets is reproduced in Moslem societies, and, in fact, similar societies everywhere. Any ordinary school-boy can read the "secret" and "cryptic" documents of these orders, though terrifying penalties are supposed to guard the secrets.

It will be convenient here to recount the basic legend of craft freemasonry, since it derives from literature shared by Jew and Moslem alike. The basic idea is the ancient solar myth of savages, which reappears over and over again in solar religions, for example in Christianity and in Mithraism. It is the story of the sun that dies in midwinter, so that all humanity is in the shadow of death, and then of the miraculous resurrection of the sun and the consequent redemption of all mankind. In solar religions this Redeemer is a mythical living personage, such as Jesus or Mithras, who tragically dies, but triumphs over death, rises from the tomb to life eternal, and is God's promise of the redemption of all mankind.

The Masonic solar-myth hero is Hiram, the cunning workman, the architect of Solomon's temple. In masonic

literature he is mysteriously referred to as "H. A. B.". He dies tragically before the work is finished, a victim of the sins of others, but triumphs over death and is raised to life eternal. But thanks to the wickedness of the world, the "true secrets" of Freemasonry have been lost, and the Freemason is ostensibly engaged in the study of the lost secrets and in the way of life which will recover them.

The ridiculousness of this, the basic foundation of Freemasonry, is patent at the first glance. The Bible says that H. A. B. finished his task and returned to Tyre, his native land, where Josephus says he lived to a ripe old age. Hiram the Phœnician (not to be confused with his master, Hiram King of Tyre), belonged to a civilised people, and it is quite likely that a savage chieftain like Solomon had to engage foreign workmen to build a temple at the price of fifteen "cities" in Galilee.

That price, fifteen cities, reduces the story of Solomon's temple to its correct proportions. The Bible gives the measurements of the edifice in cubits. Even allowing these to be royal cubits of 20 inches, we get a primitive structure about 120 feet long and 30 feet wide. The size and "glory" of this temple, with its crude decorations, was imposing only to the Jews, an appallingly primitive people who were quite unable to build anything of the sort. The dimensions given above include three open courts, so the interiors, only about 10 feet high, must have been quite insignificant. The pride of Solomon consisted in the fact that it was the only stone

building in all his dominion, which in his heyday was nearly as large as Wales. It is this paltry structure that the Freemasons have selected as the exemplar of the perfect art of building, and round which they have gathered so many astonishing legends. The building was not even vaulted, as the principle of the arch was not known to the Phœnicians of the time. This, by the way, knocks the bottom out of the entire philosophy of the masonic Royal Arch, which bases itself upon the principles of vaulting as exemplified in the perfect temple of Solomon. But Thomas Dunckerley, when he elaborated the Royal Arch degree, had very little accurate information about the ancient Jews. He accepted at face value the "glory" and powers of Solomon, as described in Jewish and Moslem literature.

Was fifteen cities a high price for such a building? It was not. The "cities" of Solomon were collections of about a score of primitive mud huts, crowded together with appalling insanitariness on the tops of hills, the whole surrounded by a mud wall.

Archeologists are still sickened when they uncover the filthy debris of these little fortified places. The great stronghold of Jericho is an example. The Israelites were quite unable to capture this place, yet it was of such a size that their whole army could march round it seven times in a single morning, and its mud rampart of such strength that it fell down when all the army stamped and shouted together.

EMBUSQUE.

(To be continued)

The other articles of this series appeared in the October, November and December Issues of "Reason"

FAITH AND DISEASE.

"The Lancet" reports a discussion on the influence of faith on disease that took place at a meeting of the Hunterian Society, London. The following is reproduced from the journal.

Rev. F. Woodlock, S. J. opening the discussion said that the faiths in connexion with disease were, as wide and varied as on any other subject. The discussion would, he supposed, consider how far faith, whether religious or faith in the doctor, could cure disease. He regarded the philosophy at the basis of Christian Science as impossible to grasp and impracticable to apply. It declared that disease was not real because matter was not real, God being spirit and all in all. Mrs. Eddy's treatment was to tell patients that they suffered, only as an insane person suffered, from an illusion. Undoubtedly an immense amount of illness disappeared under Christian Science treatment. Hypochondria was more effectively cured than by any other method, but there was no instantaneous cure of grave organic lesions by any natural powers, whether of mind or medicine.

The next step from complete denial of disease was to assimilate the idea of sickness and sin. The Roman Catholic Church believed that this tendency to-day went rather too far. Sin and sickness were both declared to be contrary to God's will. Those who held that theory about suffering were a long way towards having as much power in healing as the Christian Scientist. That was not, however, the Christian theory of suffering; it implied that every deathbed was the triumph of evil.

The limits of suggestive treatment or mental treatment must lie within purely functional diseases. A sudden organic

change equivalent to a creative act would mean that the natural had been surpassed. That was the criterion by which all ecclesiastical courts judged a miracle. Very extraordinary cases were seen, even in the twentieth century; all that could be desired in evidence of something contradicting the known laws of medicine was laid before the courts. It was astonishing that the scientific man did not think it worth while to give his mind to subjects such as Lourdes. People constantly said that if there was a miracle, all rational medicine was at an end, but in fact everything possible must be known of the normal before anyone could claim that it had been transcended.

Dr. Robert Hutchison said he wished to approach the subject from a purely rational and common-sense point of view. Faith might have a good or bad effect in disease. There was nowadays no disbelief in faith healing. The patient's faith in his doctor or his bottle of medicine did much to cure him; indeed, the patient who knew the chemical constituents of his medicine was far less likely to be cured. It did not matter what the faith was in; if there was enough of it, it cured, whether it was in the bone of a saint or Purkinje's tract. The greater the object of the faith, the greater its power. The *modus operandi* of all faith-healing was auto-suggestion, acting through the "mind" via the sympathetic nervous system and the endocrine glands. Father Woodlock believed in something from outside acting on the patient's tissues and effecting an instantaneous change; there ordinary physicians joined issue with him. There were simple explanations of the Lourdes cases: a mistake of diagnosis, or failure of the disease to "play the game."

The entirely exceptional thing happened every now and again in disease. The limitations of the healing powers of faith were not set entirely within functional diseases. The pain and the early tissue changes of organic disease might be affected. Doctors were as justified in cooperating with a faith-healer as with a masseuse; provided the case had been properly diagnosed. There doctors should put their foot down, for only by careful diagnosis could disaster be avoided.

Faith might have a bad effect if the patient believed in the wrong things; there was something in the evil eye. People who believed in witches were damaged by witches. If the patient believed that a certain article of food would give him dyspepsia, that food would cause dyspepsia. A large part of the work of a doctor was to dispel bad beliefs and free his patients from their influence.

Dr. William Brown said that both previous speakers had introduced dichotomies that he could not accept. The spiritual could not be separated from the material or the miraculous from the nonmiraculous. An experienced practitioner's influence was on the whole man. The spiritual differed from mental only in the point of view: the point of view of value. Value as such was out of time, and so far as we lived a life of value we lived the eternal life here and now. Spiritual healing was going on the whole time so long as life was taken at its full value. The person was not a soul bound to a corpse, but mind and body acting together. Psychology was an integral part of medicine; the physician was the faith-healer if he knew his work. The doctor of the future would be trained in

psychology as carefully and axiomatically as he was in physiology to-day. The distinction between the organic and the functional was a false one, which had arisen in neurology. Organic nerve cases were quite hopeless, for nerve-fibres had been destroyed and could not be reconstructed by any means. In any other nervous illness mental treatment might bring about recovery.

From the point of view of causation, a good many patients ought never to have become ill. They had become ill because they had no faith. The faith cure was not auto-suggestion, which held the patient to one idea; this might improve but did not cure. The improvement only became a cure when the active faith state was aroused and sustained. The object of the faith was of great importance perhaps; the word should only be used in its highest sense as belief in an ultimate value, which made it worth while for the universe to continue. For illness there must always be lowering of resistance, and the essential mental factor was fear; being unsure of oneself. Modern psychology was learning the ramifications of fear in early life, as it led to weakness and illness. Over-valuation of the self and anxiety about it was found at the back of all fear. Children must be taught to leave boldly, and that would lower the incidence of disease.

Death must be distinguished from disease. Death was inevitable and had its place in the biological scheme. The disgrace was to die before the allotted span. Disease was a mistake and an accident. We had powers of resistance of which the limits were unknown. Analysis and suggestion were complementary, and both should be used. That was true spiritual healing. The miracles of

Lourdes might happen, but they were not against Nature; they were Nature. What scientist could say that we knew to-day all there was to know of the *vis medicatrix naturæ*?

DISCUSSION.

Mr. Meadham Eccles spoke as a surgeon who had been on three faith-healing committees. He declared that disease was not related to delinquency; God had created bacteria and seen that they were very good. He was still waiting to see a really surgical case cured by faith or spiritual healing. Such cases could be helped towards cure, but had not been directly cured. There was nothing known to science that would replace the destroyed muscles in infantile paralysis. Photographs and radiograms of "miraculously" cured patients were sometimes taken before and sometimes after cure, but both were never available.

Dr. Thompson Brown said that doctors regarded faith as a rather unethical method; their ideal was not faith but wisdom applying useful knowledge. Disease was as natural as health; if a dog had worms God hated neither the dog nor the worms. It was our business to free ourselves from harmful parasites. Not faith, but the hourly activity of every cell gave us our will to live and constituted the *vis medicatrix naturæ*. The power of faith was simply the power of bodily emotion. Faith in the impossi-

ble was the special home of lost causes. Some preferred fables to effort.

Mr. D. C. L. Fitzwilliams said that faith did cure. The inseparable connexion between functional and organic was insufficiently realised. Knowledge had increased and done away with the miraculous element. A modern operation would be a miracle to John Hunter.

Father Woodlock, in reply, said he agreed with nearly everything he had heard that evening. No Roman Catholic was bound by his faith to believe in a Lourdes miracle, but possibly only a Catholic could consider the subject as a genuine free thinker. He asked his audience to sit down before the facts and see if they could explain them.

Dr. Hutchison said that the crux of the discussion was the belief in the miraculous as something different from and altogether beyond the ordinary faith-healing. A scientific man could approach the subject with a perfectly open mind, but at present he did not believe in the miracles because he did not think the evidence was sufficient to convince the ordinary scientific man.

Dr. William Brown said that only medical psychologists were beginning to know about faith-healing—it was not a familiar subject. No one was "merely a doctor"; great scientists were all using the spirit. An open mind was not quite the same thing as an empty mind.

WHAT ATHEISM MEANS TO ME.

Some twenty odd years ago a young student who was a sincere and active Christian, and who was, therefore, an unwavering believer in the existence and power of God, made a solemn vow.

Being certain of the need for a firm belief in the Deity as an essential to right living, he determined to acquaint himself with all the most convincing arguments which would enable him to impress this necessity upon the doubter and the unbeliever. His studies, however, drove him soon to the discovery that the chief link in the chain of Christian evidence was missing. The one fundamental tenet, the belief in God's existence, was invariably taken either as proved or as not requiring proof. This was all very well for discussions with such as were already convinced. But for those who demanded proof instead of assumption, something more was clearly needed as a basis of discussion than the usual arguments from Creation, Tradition or Personal Revelation.

The argument from Tradition failed in that it did no more than its modern exponents. It took God's existence for granted and made no attempt at proof. Personal revelation was unsatisfactory because it was no better than mere assertion without proof. However reliable an individual might be, his claim that the existence of (let us say) Umtipoo had been revealed to him personally would not, of itself, be proof that Umtipoo really existed. The argument from Creation was equally inconclusive. For if the Universe were proof of the existence of a Creator, then the Creator would be proof of the existence of a Super-Creator—and so on backwards indefinitely. Proof of a First Cause was as impossible as a proof as a Last Effect.

With the inadequacy of these so-called "proofs" our friend the student was quite familiar. Yet, never having examined the sources of his own convictions, he was so sure of God's existence that he made a solemn vow to discover at least one proof that should be irrefutable. Since God was the most real of all realities, it followed that there must be some method of proving his existence even more conclusively than the existence of any other thing in creation. And since God was also the Truth, he confidently added the stipulation that he would debar no line of investigation and no conclusion whose truth could be proved, no matter how much these might appear to go counter to his preconceived ideas.

It is safe to say that, if the consequences of this attitude could have been foreseen, our erstwhile student's religious fervour would have prevented him from adopting it. He would have preferred, as so many persons prefer, to go through life with his head buried in the sands of illusion. But fortunately he had no cause to fear the truth more than his own predilections. So he was not tempted to take refuge in that coward's castle of religious bigotry and selfdeceit which says: "I refuse to admit any evidence, however true, which contradicts my religious beliefs." And the result, though slow in arriving, was inevitable.

For fifteen years I, who was that student, struggled single-handed through a welter of religious ambiguity and obscurantism. Never in all that time did I read a single book by an avowed Atheist, Agnostic, Rationalist or Free-thinker. I was not even aware of the existence of the last two titles; while an Agnostic was, for me, simply one who was too lazy to trouble his head about

religion. As for the term *Atheist*, this was synonymous with the word *criminal*, and represented one who, knowing religion to be essential to morality, had deliberately abandoned it as an excuse for his immorality. My ignorance was, indeed, profound; yet truth would not be denied. In the end God Jehovah, Allah, angels, devils, spirits and the whole phantasmagoria with which man in his ignorant imagination still peoples the world of reality, vanished into that limbo of useless nothings whence Baal, Osiris, Wodin and the rest of the pantheon of dead and forgotten deities have long since disappeared.

I need not explain in detail how my gradual conversion came about; nor how at a later date chance brought me in touch with those two great emancipatory organizations, the N. S. S. and the R. P. A. My purpose is to indicate what my new outlook means to me, and what I believe it can mean to anyone who might choose to adopt the Atheistic philosophy after having thoroughly investigated its *bona fides*. For Atheism has all to gain and nothing to lose or fear from the closest scrutiny—a fact which is proved to the hilt by the behaviour of its bitterest enemies, who steadfastly refused to meet its exponents in open debate and who, in their written attacks upon it, invariably misrepresent its aims and vilify its adherents.

As may be gathered from what I have already said, Atheism stands first and foremost in my mind as an attitude of unswerving adherence to and acceptance of truth, no matter where it may lead. And by truth I mean conclusions and statements which can be verified by personal experience, and which do not depend upon mere heresay evidence or traditional

authority. This does not exclude the consideration of theories or possibilities. But it forbids the assertion as truths of propositions which are incapable of proof or which are as yet unproved. On these grounds it is an untruth to assert that God exists; and it is a truth to assert that God, in the religious sense of the term, does not exist. With any other meaning that may be applied to the term we are not concerned since to use it in any but a religious sense would be a plain misuse of language. It is as unjustifiable, for example, to say that the term God means Nature, as it is to say that Atheism is a religion.

Seeing that the fundamental assertion of Theistic religions can be proved false, it follows that all the other beliefs based upon it are suspect. The fact that these differ enormously in different religions—even in different sects of the same religion—is further cause for suspicion. But to confine ourselves to the Christian religion, the main beliefs which I reject for lack of evidence are (1) the use of prayer, (2) the innate sinfulness of man and (3) a life after death, with its additional hypothesis of rewards and punishments.

In the absence of a God prayer is obviously a waste of breath. But even on the assumption of a god it is equally useless. For, were it possible for everyone to pray so that his requests, if granted, would not clash with the requests of others, it would still necessitate a God that could change his mind. But since this would detract from his alleged omniscience the Christian religion emphatically declares that God cannot change his mind. This being so, why pray that he may do so, either in our own favour or in anyone else's? On the other hand,

to treat prayer as a sort of fatalistic reminder to God to do what he always intended to do ("Thy will be done") seems not merely futile, but comic. Instead, therefore, of that servile bending of the knee to an imaginary power that promises to do everything, but in fact does nothing, Atheism teaches me to look confidently out and around upon life, with a view to increasing my knowledge and intelligence, so that when conditions arise which call for judgment and action I shall be the better fitted to deal with them effectively.

It is difficult to understand how any sane Christian can believe in the innate sinfulness of man and in the absolute perfection of his creator at one and the same time. The only possible explanation is that, like many other senseless beliefs, he has never troubled to think the matter over; or else that he has smothered the absurdity with that beautiful, yet wicked, word *mystery*. In no other sphere of thought would he tolerate such a palpable self-contradiction. To call it a *mystery* is identical with saying "I don't understand it"—and who but religiously-minded persons could assert and accept as truth a statement which they cannot understand? Here again is a strong indictment against religious teaching—it breeds prevarication and evasion of issues. In place of this Atheism takes the facts of life as they are known to be. The morality of man varies with the individual and depends upon a number of factors whose effects can, with increasing knowledge, be gauged with increasing accuracy. Man does not choose to do evil, knowing the good—a childish, illogical supposition. The relative, moral or social nature of his behaviour is in direct proportion to the influence of his inherited

characteristics and his environment. Like disease—once fatalistically regarded as an act of God—crime, poverty and every other human ill is found to be amenable to control and capable of amelioration. Atheism denies that any one of them is inevitable and it gives zest to the battle of intellect which must be waged against them. In lieu of blame and punishment—which is revenge and sadism under thin disguise—it substitutes control and preventive measures.

Lastly Atheism asserts that when we die we are dead. This is usually such a severe blow to personal conceit that many are unwilling to accept Atheism on this ground alone. It undoubtedly accounts for the helter-skelter stampede from religion to spiritualism on the part of many otherwise intelligent persons. Yet I can assure those whose self-importance is a matter of the most supreme importance that, as a former believer in "eternal" life, I find it no more depressing to realize that I shall not be alive five hundred years hence than to realize that I was not alive five hundred years ago. On the contrary, because I do not believe that I or anyone else will live when we are dead, I am a far keener and more interested participant in life and am no longer comforted into indifference towards the sufferings of my fellow-beings by the belief that God will straighten out his own mess in the Never Land. I grieve at the death of one near or dear to me just as any ordinary Christian does—and with greater logic on my side. But an imperative urge drives me so to act towards the living that whatever I do may be for the most lasting happiness of the greatest number. Happiness, here and now, is my supreme aim—because I know that others cannot be happy while

I am not, just as I know ~~that~~ I cannot be happy while others are not. Bigotry, dogmatism, intolerance, fatalism and indifference—all of which are nurtured and preserved by the teaching of religion—cannot be admitted into the scheme of life which Atheism offers.

If it be asked why I choose the title of Atheist in preference to Humanist, Agnostic or some other alternative, the answer is that, as in other matters, I detest ambiguity. Everyone knows that the word implies one who does not quibble as to whether somehow, somewhere there may be something or other which might, by a stretch of imagination

or a twist of language, be entitled to that nebulous name "God." And further it implies one who is opposed to all religious teaching on the ground that it is superstitious and perverse of right thinking. Atheism, to me, does not merely mean a fight against false and superstitious beliefs, but also a struggle against the one force in life which has done and does most to make for the unhappiness of mankind under the hypocritical pretence of trying to make it happy.

C. S. FRASER.
in "The Freethinker."

CORRESPONDENCE.

To

The Editor, "Reason."

Dear Sir,

As you have been so kind as to invite any of your readers, who are interested in the friendly discussion between Dr. Banker & Dr. C. L. d'Avoine, which have appeared in the October & November issues of Reason, to express their views on the subject, may I be permitted to take the side of Dr. C. L. d'Avoine, and point out to Dr. Banker a fundamental weakness in what he has been pleased to call a friendly discussion.

Dr. Banker talks of science, by which, in this case, I presume he means Physical Science, as if it was a branch of science with which he was conversant. In the article appearing in the November issue, he occasionally flashes before the reader's eyes, such names as Newton &

Einstein, Dr. Barnes, Sir Oliver Lodge, & Sir C. V. Raman. This of course is to make the reader see his familiarity with this particular branch of Science which is the fundamental of his discussion viz. Matter, electrons, neutrons? atoms & electricity.

At the outset I must remark that I do not know what a neutron is. I must apologise for this ignorance on my part, but I will beg Dr. Banker to remember that one cannot know everything. However, I have noticed that Dr. Banker himself does not seem to know much about matter, electrons, atoms & electricity.

This is the reason why I have asked the Editor to permit me to air my views, and show Dr. Banker that in any argument, the fundamental basis should be correct.

It is not sufficient to say as Dr. Banker has done "Scientists though advancing,

still grope in darkness. Electron is a puzzle to them etc. etc.....from this we can well say science is still in its infancy; and we have a long way to go, when it will be proved that physical energy is controlled by Superintellectual and other assisting energies etc."—

If Science does not know, how does Dr. Banker know? Is it by Divine revelation?

I may now tell Dr. Banker that Science being truthful does not say it knows "all" about the electron. But the dear Doctor would be really surprised to know how much is really known.

Let me give Dr. Banker a little insight into the subject of matter of which he talks so much; I am sure that he will be very much surprised or perhaps he may laugh and say "nonsense, it cannot be proved."

A very great Dutchman Lorentz gave to the world several years ago, a very brilliant Synthesis on Matter.

"Matter, Lorentz says, is entirely formed of electrons bearing enormous charges and if it appears to us neutral it is because the electrons' charges of opposite sign balance.

All these electrons are immersed in ether etc.

This Hypothesis gives us the knowledge that inertia is exclusively of electro-magnetic origin, and is reduced to the inertia of the ether.

Electrons are no longer anything in themselves, they are only holes in the ether, around which the ether is agitated."

What is really meant by this is that matter is nothing by itself, it is only an appearance, it is only a state of tension of the ether. Of course at this stage Dr. Banker may say, what about it, this is only a hypothesis of Lorentz not supported by any evidence. But wait, let us see now what Abraham & Kaufmann say on this subject.

Dr. Banker talks so much of electricity and the guiding force of the human brain in his reply to Dr. d'Avoine that he will now be very much interested. I am going to tell him what he does not know and that is what electricity is.

No doubt he knows what is called the phenomena of self induction which gives rise to an electro-motive force when an electric current is accelerated. Now it can be proved that this self induction is an "*actual inertia*".

If a cathode corpuscle, (which is what is vulgarly called a particle of negative electricity) receives an acceleration, the intensity of the corresponding current will vary equally, and there will be developed effect of self induction which will give rise to E. M. F. This corpuscle must therefore have an actual inertia and an apparent inertia due to self induction. It will therefore have a total apparent mass composed of its real mass and of a fictitious mass of electro-magnetic origin. Calculation shows that this fictitious mass varies with the velocity of the corpuscle, and that the force of inertia of self induction is not the same when the velocity of the projectile is increased or diminished as when its direction is changed.

The total apparent mass is therefore not the same when the actual force applied to the corpuscle is parallel with its velocity as when it is perpendicular to the velocity and tends to alter its direction. We must therefore distinguish between "*Total Longitudinal mass and total transversal mass*" and moreover these two total masses depend upon the velocity. Such are the results of Abraham's theoretical work.

Now Kaufmann has deduced the relation between the velocity and the proportion of the charge to the total apparent mass.

Abraham's calculations make us acquainted with the law in accordance with which the fictitious mass varies as a function of the velocity, and Kaufmann's experiment make us acquainted with the law of variation of the total mass. A comparison of these two laws will therefore enable us to determine the proportion of the *actual mass* to the total mass.

Such is the method employed by Kaufmann. The result is most surprising: *The actual mass is nil*. What we call mass would seem to be nothing but an appearance, and all inertia to be of electro-magnetic origin. Mass is no longer constant, it increases with velocity, and although apparently constant for small velocities up to as much as 600 miles per second, it becomes infinite for the velocity of light.

Now electrons and cathode corpuscles are identical and if matter is composed of electrons, we are faced with this unexpected conception, that matter has no mass, what we call mass is only an appearance which bears out Lorentz's hypothesis.

Therefore all energy or what we know as energy is of electro-magnetic origin and it varies with the velocity.

What Dr. Banker calls electricity, the force of which he says is captured and controlled by man, therefore, would seem to be only an appearance, a hole in the ether, or if he prefers, a state of strain in that ether.

Now, I would ask Dr. Banker how can any being superintellectual or otherwise control a state of strain.

Take now a bubble of gas; its molecules are in a state of great agitation; now and again, perhaps once in a hundred million two molecules will "*collide*", there will be a change of Direction in the motion of those molecules, force will be developed and energy radiated. This is occurring with millions of molecules in the bubble of gas.

If Scientists are correct, this force is only a state of strain in what we call the Ether, which is the electricity of which Dr. Banker talks about. And can the Doctor really tell us that he believes that

Ahura-Mazda has controlled the collisions in the bubble of gas, which is only an appearance? It would be much better if Dr. Banker admitted once for all that his Deity has nothing to do with collisions in a bubble of gas or conduction currents generated by a Dynamo or by the Radio activity of Radium.

Einstein has not contradicted Newton, he only supplemented the knowledge that Newton lacked, and explained to us what had already been discovered by Lorentz, Abraham and Kaufmann.

When Science states something it is not groping in the dark, it is accurate, reliable and *Truthful* which is more than any Devine revelation has been so far.

If Dr. Banker doubts my words, I will not ask him to enquire from Sir Oliver Lodge who is rather far away and does not perhaps see our modest "Reason," but Sir C. V. Raman is amongst us in India. Let Dr. Banker ask the Originator of the Scattering of Light and he may then believe that Science does not grope in any darkness. As for consulting Sir Rabindranath Tagore and Mr. Gandhi in this matter, with due respect to these eminent personalities, I am nearly sure that they do not know anything of Plank's or Bohr's Quantum Theories, and they could therefore give us no information on the subject at issue.

In conclusion I will say again that if the fundamental of an argument is untrue, the argument must be untrue, and as Dr. Banker under a mantle of scientific knowledge is arguing about matter, of which he knows nothing (neither he nor his Superintellectual Ahura-Mazda), therefore the argument is composed of empty words which make no sense and I will stick by Dr. D'Avoine's reasoning, and say further that the whole of this funny Universe of ours is an accidental and uncontrolled quanta of energy, in fact, it is only a bubble of gas in which Ahura-Mazda has no place, except what has been imagined by hysterical superstitious mystics.

E. TERNEI.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

THE METHODS OF OBSCURANTISTS

People are often reminded in these days by interested preachers, religious propagandists, and irresponsible writers in newspapers and magazines that the latest discoveries in science have completely demolished the Materialism of the last century, that religion is now firmly rehabilitated and that many eminent men of Science now believe in the existence of God as firmly as an ignorant monk or an unsuspecting Mahomedan in his Allah. What has given rise to this erroneous idea is undoubtedly the assiduous efforts that are being made by the

Churches, the Press, and other religiously-minded persons to stem the tide of unbelief which is spreading rapidly in every civilized country. These people are always on the look-out to seize upon any pronouncement by eminent persons which seems to imply a belief in the supernatural and to broadcast the same as striking evidence of a belief in religion. Of late, much has been made of the metaphysical speculations of certain well-known physicists in England to create the erroneous impression that the latest discoveries in physical sciences have upset the theories on which modern knowledge is built. Advantage is taken of the confusion that the Theory of Relativity appeared to bring on the question of Space, Time, Causality and the Cosmological problems to create such an impression. The Theory of Relativity is a subject which is far beyond the comprehension of the average layman, and those who claim to have a knowledge of such a difficult question can naturally impose on those who have not. For instance, a person with a smattering of the recent findings in physical science can assure his ignorant hearers that the Quantum Theory of Energy does not square with the principle of causality or that the behaviour of the atom, as revealed by the newest methods of observation, shows an indeterminacy of the microphysical particles which, according to his point of view, clearly points to the freedom of the will. He will try to impress one of the fallibility of science and the eternal truth of religion, and will triumphantly point out that so significant are these latest discoveries of science supporting religion that eminent scientists as Sir Arthur Eddington, Sir James Jeans, and others have no alternative but to admit the existence of God. People

who have read the works of Sir Arthur Eddington, Sir Oliver Lodge or Sir James Jeans, to mention only three eminent physicists, much in the limelight at present, know what value is to be attached to their belief in God. The God they believe in is certainly not that of the Old Testament nor of Christianity. It is a vague and shadowy figure, remote and ethereal which cannot for a moment be identified with the anthropomorphic deity of the Jews or Christians. Yet, the belief of these scientists in some undefined power beyond the universe has greatly encouraged certain philosophers and theologians who have not understood the reason of the apparent disagreement between the new theories and the old, and know little of exact science and practise scientific method still less, to proclaim the bankruptcy of Materialism and the fallibility of Science! These irresponsible utterances are made and broadcasted by religious professors though other eminent scientists in England and abroad, feeling greatly surprised at this unwarranted inference, promptly pointed out that such conclusions could not be drawn from such scientific discoveries like, say, the atomic indeterminateness and the Quantum Theory, and that it was erroneous to infer from these latest discoveries the overthrow of the physics of older scientists. It is not easy to understand what these religionists gain by such methods of make-belief. They, themselves, have mostly rejected the fables of the Old Testament and the supernaturalism of the New. The Christianity they profess is certainly not that delivered to the Saints. Yet, they are terribly anxious to see religion flourish. Their religious belief, whatever else they may profess to believe outwardly, is a sort of mysticism, a belief that the Ultimate Reality, whatever

is understood by this, is only to be found in spiritual meditation, that God can only be approached through Christ, the Mediator, that mankind cannot be happy without Christ, and the ethics of Christianity are indispensable for the welfare of humanity. Apart from these convictions, which appear to be sincere enough, there can be no doubt that vested interest is the motive that stimulates all this desire to see religion prosperous. The frequent assurance that there is no longer any conflict between religion and science is made by these people, and some sects actually are bold enough to assert more than this. They seriously assure their followers that science has never succeeded in disturbing their religious tenets, and as far as they are concerned they are perfectly indifferent to what science may say regarding religious beliefs. These obscurantists, may be broadly divided into these classes. There is, for instance, the class which agrees to a great extent with everything that science teaches; they contend that they see more clearly the truth of religion as illuminated by modern science. Even Evolution, which they no longer oppose, reveals, they say, the infinite wisdom of God in creating superior beings by gradual evolution. The Bible, they say, despite the human elements they readily admit it contains, is nevertheless a divine production, as, hidden under oriental imagery, there is a wealth of spiritual truth and beauty that man alone, unassisted by Divine favour, would never have discerned. The Bible, they say, remains "The Book of Books" and its teachings must be by all means encouraged. They assert that the mystery of life and the purpose of living would be meaningless without Christ, that unbelief is a dreadful thing, and that salvation, peace, and happiness are only

obtainable through Christ. They call themselves broad-minded Christians and think they are perfectly entitled to be appointed high Church dignitaries with fat emoluments.

There is another class which is vehemently opposed to science all round. In America they are known as Fundamentalists where their hostility to science is openly and shamelessly manifested. In other countries they are very numerous and have great influence though this may not be so powerful as in America where they can legislate against the teaching of Science. They claim that the Bible is the "Word of God" and every word in it from cover to cover was divinely inspired. They teach the Cosmogony of Moses, the Astronomy of Joshua and they live in the supernatural world of the old Hebrew. In England they profoundly influence people in high position and the Press is always in fear of them. If they could have their way completely they would be a great nuisance, as they mean to be as intolerant and bigoted as possible. They insist that people must conform to their views, and only quite recently they succeeded in forcing Parliament to lay down vexatious rules for Sunday observance which are very annoying to those who are not of their way of thinking. A good deal of the hypocrisy one finds in England in matters religious is really due to these objectionable people who imagine that they can stem the tide of unbelief there. Yet, there can be no doubt that, with the spread of knowledge, unbelief is making sound and sure progress in England and this naturally causes alarm to people of certain social strata. The Churches are getting more and more empty everyday, and the different Christian denominations are uniting to combat this serious menace to religion.

Every one with a little foresight can see a great social upheaval coming in the country of John Bull, and small wonder that those in high places, particularly, give the greatest encouragement to those nosy-parkers to interfere with the masses in order to keep them within the orbit of religious influence.

Quite recently the Pope of Rome, and some influential dignitaries of the Church of England, backed by some members of the Nobility denounced Atheism as Communism and tried to frighten the people with the bogey of Bolshevism. In this they had the hearty support of the Press, and just now a vigorous campaign is being carried out in England against Free-thought. Even the Broad-casting Company has lent its support for the dissemination of religious views and booksellers and publishers are careful not to sell works of an heterodox nature—all this in England which boasts to be to the Land of Liberty!

In America, as we know, they are even more oppressive and offensive. In such States where their influence is paramount they have made laws against the teaching of Science in general and Evolution in particular. They have founded many colleges in which they have appointed professors of their own selection. These are supposed to be very clear scientists. They have been engaged on the sole understanding of upholding religion and running down Science. Some of them are so bold as to publish ridiculous books purporting to be serious scientific works. Not very long ago, one of these professors and authors went to London and actually had the temerity to challenge one of England's finest scholars and scientists to a debate on Evolution. It transpired that he was a great anti-evolutionist and he based his attacks on the

erroneous idea that all the data and facts of geology and paleontology which support Evolution were false and were all pure imagination. The challenge was accepted and he was patiently listened to even when he went to the length of describing the present science of geology as "*une geologie a l'envers*" and would have it that it was all wrong as he had shown in a publication of his own called the "*New Geology*"! Needless to say he was heartily laughed at, but he was apparently unabashed when he left for the States where he and other of his ilk continue to mislead people under a cloak of scientific knowledge. Ridiculous as these people are, one must give them credit for their frankness in openly admitting that to accept scientific facts means the death of Christianity.

We have now to deal with a different class as widespread and influential as the above. We refer to the Roman Catholics and those of other persuasions who adopt the same attitude towards modern knowledge and its effects on religious thought. Their attitude is one of outward complacency and they affect to be quite indifferent about what science teaches even when this is quite at variance with what the Scriptures say. They contend that Science cannot touch religious truth, and religion is too firmly established on an impregnable rock to fear anything. They boast that Catholicism has had to contend against many storms from the very beginning of its career, and that it has always emerged stronger and more glorious after each encounter. (Which, of course, is not a fact. It has suffered some terrible blows from which it has been much weakened and has never recovered. One need only mention the defection of the Orthodox Church, the Reformation and anti-clericalism in most

Catholic countries in Europe to make this clear). They claim that the Catholic Church, being the depository of divine truth, cannot err and it is not the province of Science to interfere in spiritual matters. Only its priests are qualified to find and teach the truth, and there is only one truth and that is Catholic truth! No modern scientific fact, it would appear, is a novelty to the Catholic Church. Its learned Schoolmen were acquainted with all this and nothing has escaped their deep penetration; but they did not draw the inference that profane scientists do now and consequently they may be treated with indifference. They will tell you that St. Jerome and St. Augustine knew this, St. Justine and St. Thomas Aquinas knew that, yet these wise men never thought for a moment that the dogmas and doctrines of the Church were endangered by scientific discoveries. They will tell you that the Church has always been the friend and promoter of science and they will point out with pride that many great scientists and discoverers were Roman Catholics. They will not forget to mention the names of Pasteur and Mendel and they will give one the impression that the Church is always on the look out to encourage scientific workers. All this, of course, is pure Bunk to use an American colloquialism. The Roman Catholic Church is as great an enemy of Science as are the Fundamentalists. It is only to throw dust in the eyes of its followers that it pretends to be quite interested in scientific discoveries and researches. Any one who doubts this should carefully read Catholic literature and publications. Learned Jesuits and others are out to misrepresent science to their students, and every effort is made to show that no modern scientific fact has ever disturbed Catholic doctrines. Its own teaching is pure Mediaevalism and all its doctrines and dogmas were framed on a wrong idea

of the Universe, God, the Devil, Sin and the rest. To realise this fully one should read a book "God and the Universe" "The Christian Position" by three clergymen: two Protestants and one Roman Catholic. This book was published quite recently to explain the Christian position in this scientific age. The Catholic contributor is a Revd. Father. M. C. D'Arcy, S. J. M. A. He and his fellow contributors labour much to justify the Christian belief in the light of scientific knowledge. It is a pure rigmarole from beginning to end. Father D'Arcy could not miss the opportunity to have a fling at Science. He repeats punctually all the worn out arguments of Roman Catholic apologists. One gathers from him that it is not the business of science to search for the truth and it is not its province to inquire about supernatural religion. So long as science confines itself to mere observation experiment and verification, the Church has nothing to say, but the moment it denies some religious truth and dogmas about supernatural religion, the Church must necessarily interfere. According to Father D'Arcy the Church of Rome is very prosperous and is quite indifferent about what Science may or may not teach. His Church continues unruffled to teach the Truth as God, Himself, has revealed to it alone. He denies that Evolution is proved, and questions the biological evidences that man is descended from a lowly animal origin. He claims that man possess a soul and it is the mission of his Church to save it. In other words, Father D'Arcy is a staunch upholder of the childish ideal on which the Church of Rome founded its doctrine and dogmas. After reading that book one is left to wonder whether Father D'Arcy and his fellow contributors really believe what they say or are out to bluff people. If they believe one can only say that they are blind for not recognizing clearly how they stand.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE INCIDENCE OF MICRO-PHYSICAL INDETERMINISM*

(Modern Physics in relation to Theism.)

I must confess to a sense of inadequacy to venture forth views upon the subject which ought to remain the prerogative of the specialist. But as professor William James once stated that "the natural enemy of any subject is the professor thereof", I can claim to handle the theme in a more friendly manner. I also rely on the high authority of Dr. F. C. S. Schiller. He accuses professors of robbing the subjects which they are paid to expound "of all human or practical interest". That they love to wrap themselves in mysteries of technical jargon and to become as nearly as possible *unintelligible*. I strive to prevent the honour of professorship approaching me. As one that emphasizes the importance of true thought, I may occupy some of your time. True thought depends upon the capacity to weigh evidence. The cultivation of that capacity is no easy matter. To distinguish fact from falsehood is the unceasing effort of the race. As professor J. W. A. Hickson once put it, regarding the cultivation of the capacity—"most people remain children and savages all their lives." It is the duty of science to nourish thought in this childhood and to lift it out of the savagery. What is the element in the scientist that is standing in the way of his achieving this object? Professor H. Levy traces this to the isolation of knowledge. The specialist scientist often finds himself in an attitude

of intellectual isolation. He lives in a state of "mental water-tightness" and is "unable to extend his specialised experience to other fields." "Thus eminence in the possession of knowledge (in a specialised field) may exist side by side with ignorance in understanding (the implications of its extension to other fields) and when these eminent gentlemen branch out into the field of interpretation, as some of our scientist specialists are doing, their eminence is a direct measure of their capacity for confusion."

The scientist knows his science, but that is his special subject. "Religion is to him a different matter altogether." He leaves it to its experts, the cleries, and the theologians. He sometimes connives at the attempt to lead science back along the "path of intellectual reaction." Science ought to break away from this isolation, and realise that the universal acceptance of its results would imply a drastic alteration in religious belief, and the elimination of some religious ideas and institutions that stand for them. Human life strives for an *organic unity*. The endeavour to bridge the gulf between science and religion is the index of the struggle to attain that unity of thought and belief. Man cannot carry logic in one pocket and the Bible in the other, the moment he realised that the two do not agree. His brain is a systematiser, it does not stand contradictions, or discrepancies in its folds, it tries to reject

* An address under the auspices of the Literary Association, Coconada.

false coins out of its treasury. It has no love for the merely old coins because of their age. It is their present value that determines their currency. It sets no store by prepossessions.

To the Indian mind the discrepancy between freedom and determinism is nothing novel. God, the free agent capable of bringing about any result irrespective of the reason of the thing, is pitched against Karma the doctrine of causality in theological parlance. The Nirhetuka benignity of Providence is implored to set at nought the effects of causation. To witness these hoary antiquities endowed by the technologies of modern science is a recreation illustrative of the limitations of human exercise which centuries of meditation or experiment have not overcome. Theism is the belief in God, in the existence of a principle subversive of causality. When the cause of a given event cannot be traced, it is left over for God to explain it. He is the unknown cause. The human mind penetrates into the relation of things until it comes across a hard opaque screen, the screen of ignorance, before which it fails. This obstructionist wall against which reason breaks is termed God. To the extent to which the content of the universe is understood, to that extent do God's possessions decrease. Natural forces like electricity, air-raids, and the constituents of the atom were once the divine province, now reduced to human possession.

The achievements of science are based on the belief in causality, or on some idea, such as invariable succession leading to the same consequences. The principal of causation is an assumption expressing the minimum requirement for the possibility of science. Absence of causation

is unintelligible. If the course of events is not definitely determined, it is not possible to understand that anything occurs for the origin of something out of nothing is inconceivable. An uncaused event is the despair of science, which thus has no place for chance, caprice, accident, or indeterminism. Darwin had applied this principle to the growth of life and the formulation of the theory of evolution "has been an escape from chance." A strict formulation of the causal principle has guided Einstein throughout his labours." He held that objects capable of being observed, they only can be regarded as causal connected. This is a restatement of Newton's *VERA CAUSA*. Forces at a distance, and other are abrogated. The general theory of relativity is as much an attempt to get at a scientific explanation of events as the mechanical view that went before it. The deflection of light in gravitational fields has added one more triumph of causation in the macrophysical universe. Mercury is the planet nearest to the Sun, which is about 95,000,000 miles from the Earth. Revolving round the Sun in a narrower ellipse, its perihelion, i. e., the position when it reaches nearest to the Sun, was shifting ground contrary to astronomical calculation. It was as if Jehovah, the capricious Jewish God, was deflecting it from its otherwise proper course. A simple expedient that light is ponderable, has weight and resistance, and is subjected to attraction by stellar entities resolved the mystery. Being very near the Sun, and the orbit being very small, light rays proceeding from the Sun were more perceptibly deflected in relation to Mercury, than the other planets. The equation of that deviation of light was carefully calculated, a formula arrived at, which successive solar eclipses are

confirming. The freewill of Mercury is thus at an end.

The history of scientific theory "is a story of the search for consistency." The book of science cannot become bound between covers. The tendency towards the "prescribed text-book" method of mastering it stultifies the object. Theories are revised, modifications are made, that lead to greater degrees of accuracy. At each revision, each modification, the face of God peeps in. The theist relies on the possibilities of progress in science as the ground for its rejection. Progress implies previous imperfection. Therefore, recourse should be had to an all-perfect principle. That principle is God.

Even if it be conceded that the theist's God is a mere principle (with a capital beginning) it is inconceivable how a god of static perfection may be responsible for other than a statically perfect universe. The galactic system, the stars breaking away, planets being blasted to dust, here a huge mass of incandescent vapour, there a dead cold solid mass, life struggling against the extremes of heat and cold, the volcano, and the earthquake, the antagonism of plant and animal life, disease and death are not the index of static perfection. Progress is as much the need of theistic hypothesis as that of science. This is an idea kept in the background by religion.

If science were to stick to the text-book mentality, like the Bible, the Koran, and the Paranas, it should remain inadequate to explain the facts of experience. Heat expands bodies, and cold contracts them. But cold does not reduce the mass of ice. On the contrary it increases it. Hydrogen is a mixture of two gases, which can be separated and only change

over into one another quite slowly. Whoever denied that hydrogen was an element until very recently? So with the atom, which is now considered to consist of bodies separated in space comparable to the solar system. The principle of indeterminacy stares the scientist at every step, but in the explanation of big bodies he seems to be more fortunate. Beside the seeming irregularity of the observed motion of Mercury, the discovery of the path of the planetoids between Mars and Jupiter, the seven moons of Jupiter, and those of Saturn, its rings, Uranus, Neptune, and last year the discovery of Pluto all are merely confirmatory of astronomical determinism. So firm has the conviction become in the fixity of the laws of motion and mass, that the revolution of the satellite of a planet around its poles instead of the equator enabled the prediction of the intervention of another planet, which later discovery verified. The composition of the stars is determined by astrophysics. The chemical action of light on photoplates indicates the substances of which different bodies are made. The colour of the light is found to be a reliable guide. In the heavens, therefore, which for long had been God's abode, the body of evidence has become so strong in favour of determinism, and the hold for chance so weak, that no spurious witness will be left without careful watch before he is finally brought under proper control.

Astronomy is no bound volume. The nebular theory of star formation is modified by the tidal-disruption theory, which is brought in to explain certain instances not lending themselves to the former. Star-dust and meteorites are rivals in stellar composition. The spiral

nebulae, the double-horned nebulae, inconceivably hot furnaces of incandescent metallic vapours, piercing cold depths of dark empty voids, remain yet to be explored. Nearer at home, and more recently (compared with the trillions, and billions of years that the remoter stellar formations may have occupied) our sun would seem to have sent off a cigar-shaped column from out of his misty body, which rolled itself into the members of the planetary family in diverse stages of growth. The huge universe is a closed system, "a continually changing matrix of events" according to one theory. It is conceived as a hollow cylinder open at both ends, past and the future, with time as the fourth dimension of the space-time continuum. This revised version of Einstein is amended by Sir James Jeans who would expand one end of the cylinder so as to make it horn-shaped, an expanding universe. These are some extreme reaches of the metaphysician in the garb of the mathematician. To spell out indeterminism from there would scarce be audible on earth.

Science recognises the tentative nature of all its generalisations. It avoids absolutes. Professor J. B. S. Haldane F. R. S. put it thus: The laws of physics, until recently, were stateable in the form that a situation or state of affairs A was necessarily followed by a situation B. Now a situation never repeats itself exactly, so a law of that kind could be stated accurately only as follows:—If a state of affairs nearly differs from A within certain specified limits, it will be succeeded by one differing from B to less than a specified extent. This is a doctrine of approximation applicable to all experience. But the margins of approximation

vary with the sizes of objects to which the causal laws are applied. Large and small material objects, such as stars and atoms do not obey the rules which were worked out for object of medium size. This is only to say that the margins of approximation will be so very disproportionate that the impression of indeterminacy gains ground relative to such laws meant for the medium-sized objects. In the discovery of fresh equations bringing down the margin of approximation within verifiable limits lies the triumph of physics. For instance, the law of gravitation is stated in terms of the cube of the masses and the square of the distance. Applied to the mass of the Sun, the Earth and the Moon, the formula is demonstrable, precise, within limits. If it should be sought to apply as between the Earth and a grain of sand other devices may have to be resorted to in support of determinacy. Mr. A. G. Whyte urged in proof of the "triumph of physics" the fact that "the progress of human thought is through metaphysics to physics." He only was relying upon the increased determinacy in the observed facts of experience, that were before speculated upon as undetermined or what is the same thing determined by God alone. Depending on the intimate connection that subsists between knowledge and belief, (the latter being equated to faith or religion) I extended the idea to the latter. I wrote (*The Literary Guide*, London, April, 1931, p. 79) "What is true of human thought is no less true of human feeling, which is more intimately associated with human belief or religion." The bearing of knowledge on faith is emphasised in the doctrine of Avidya or Maya. To overcome Avidya, Sankara taught in to realise the Brahman. If ever the intellect

could be compounded with religion, i. e. if an intellectual religion be not a contradiction in terms, his philosophy, the historic reaction against the prior atomic theories, holds the field. The impossibility of the concept of an Absolute (the Nirguna Brahman) tends to water down to the Saguna plane (the world of attributes, of phenomena, that is, of events in the Einsteinian sense.) Man began with wonder and worship of the physical forces of nature, and his knowledge of these forces grew more and more intimate, his mastery over them became more and more perfect, until a new vision of the relative 'beyond' evoked fresh wonders to be thereafter harnessed. Religion is no longer blind worship, but its progress is from the unknown icy regions of metaphysical speculation to the fertile domain of scientific exploration. Professor H. Levy describes the rationalist's position similarly. "He, the rationalist, sees the manner in which Man has evolved in body and in mind. He sees the way in which his continually expanding experience is reflected in his primitive explanations of natural phenomena, in his personification of Nature in the form of a multitude of gods. He sees society unfolding as Man bends these gods to his will, and nature shapes Man's outlook to its mould."

If thus our faiths and creeds are to be well-founded, they ought to rest on the firmer ground prepared by science, by determinism, rather than the slough of indeterminate wager. The interaction of religion and science is imminent however insulated and compartmental our knowledge, and however segregated our belief. While the discoveries of science tend to repel the shaken creeds of antiquity, the

latter in their turn leave a prejudice in the mind and tend to revert even in the formulation of hypotheses to forms of belief proved to have become worthy of being discarded. The content of belief undergoes a process of rejuvenation, old names acquire new scientific significance, but tenderness to gods revered in infancy is a tendency of the race. In the dim past man groped to the feeble recognition that god made man in his own image. In broader light it is realised that man made his gods in his own image. The study of anthropology, comparative religion and a host of other sciences revealed the anthropomorphic origins in the evolution of the idea of god. Even after the rise of the critical consciousness, scientific eminence is able to retain a few of the predispositions of the past, howsoever attenuated in form. A passing reference may be made to the psychic experiences that influenced Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Sir Oliver Lodge. Their spiritualist speculation does not compel a scrutiny of their experiment, as they did not purport to set at naught the principle of causality. On the other hand, the entire effort of psychic research starts on the *a priori* principle of science, the principle "that experimental knowledge is synonymous with causal knowledge." The experiments themselves may be correct, or they may be wrong, but that is a different matter. Great names intimately connected with the advance of physical science have deflected in the operative chapter of their influence from their native spheres and transferred their lustre to new adaptations.

There is another developement in the ranks of science indicated by names like Sir James Jeans and Sir Arthur Eddington. To the former God is a mathematician solving problems in the expanse of the

Universe. Two books that capture popular imagination today are "The Universe Around Us" and the "Mysterious Universe". They countenance the theistic view of the world and the religionist has seized upon them with avidity. It does not matter to him that the revengeful god of the Jewish epoch that was later transfigured into the Christian Lord now occupies an indifferent professorial chair working geometrical riddles affecting conic sections, attended upon by Jeans. It is not to overlook the importance of an ultimate science whose conclusions remain unaffected by the reductions of physical matter to its minimum, to be reminded of the fact that the extreme reaches of abstract calculations are not often visualised dissociated from anthropomorphic prejudices. Nor again is it derogatory to the claims of scientific aspirations, if we are forced to admit that those extreme reaches of visualisation, of the smallest as also of the greatest magnitudes, the absolute zero, and the complete infinity, will be left hazy and nebulous, indeterminate as it were. Relativity governs the universe, to which absolutes are merely the abstract ideal. The most powerful telescope and the best constructed microscope take us merely a step further than unaided vision. Standing between the rails of a straight railroad we see the parallels projecting either way to lose themselves in the dim distance. A good binocular extends the view to a greater length, but not without limit. So, with the wavelengths of light and sound. The ultra-violet ray is beyond the human eye. X-ray apparatus assists observation beyond the normal wavelength. The invention of the new wireless-valve enables the reception of distant messages lost to the normal ear. The classical physics of Galileo

and Newton postulate particles. The universe is a conglomerate of atoms or particles whose shuffling readjustments result in changes of life and motion. It may be visualised as a picture printed from a half-tone block, composed of dots adjusted to greater or less degree of nearness to give the proper light-and-shade effect. This implies isolation of individual particles. What is responsible for the readjustment for the change, how such a change can be affected through intervening emptiness, unless a mystic medium like aether is postulated, how again an effect on one particle can be transferred to another were problems that puzzled physics that was then unable to get over the dualism of matter and energy. "Darwin has suggested that the wave-mechanical account of the universe is the true one and the account of it in terms of particles, the work of our minds".

Albert Einstein in his book "Relativity, the Special and the General Theory" (translated by R. W. Lawson D. Sc.) writes: "As a result of the more careful study of electromagnetic phenomena, we have come to regard action at a distance as a process impossible without the intervention of some intermediary medium. If, for instance, a magnet attracts a piece of iron, we cannot be content to regard this as meaning that the magnet acts directly through the intermediate empty space, but we are constrained to imagine—after the manner of Faraday—that the magnet always calls into being something physically real in the space around it, that something being what we call a magnetic field. In its turn this magnetic field operates on the piece of iron, so that the latter strives to move towards the magnet". Applying the general

principle of relativity to rays of light he holds that they "are propagated curvilinearly in gravitational fields" and not rectilinearly, the degree of curvature depending on the divergence of gravitation. The dots in the half-tone picture are replaced by lines drawn in greater and smaller distances from one another to indicate the differences of light and shade.

The Quantum Theory of Planck makes the lines in our picture discontinuous, so that instead of full-stops and lines, the universe is now made of commas. The waves that this theory postulates have both position and momentum, though it has been found "that to measure simultaneously both the position and momentum of the unit of section is not possible." Heisenberg therefore raised the Uncertainty Principle, which questions the logic of science. He states that "it is false to assume that by progress in technique we could reduce the errors of prediction to as small values as we wished." There is an upper limit to the accuracy of all measurement, and the uncertainty becomes very great when we are measuring things as small as atoms or electrons, though it is negligible in ordinary measurements, which involve billions and billions of atoms. "An electron or proton is represented by a train of waves characterised in a particular manner, which interact with other-wave trains. But the electron is nowhere in particular. The waves merely determine the probability of finding it in a given place at a given time. Unfortunately, however, we cannot observe the waves directly, or imagine any method of doing so."

Heisenberg's uncertainty was refuted by Planck, the author of the Quantum

Theory, who in contrast with Einstein agrees with Kant that determination is an *a priori* principle of knowledge. Then came the criticism of the Quantum Physics is a modified form. The total uncertainty of Heisenberg was found to be too much. Physical laws may be true statistically, but not determinable with reference to individual behaviour. Exner's view point is thus illustrated. A familiar instance will bring out the distinction between the group result or statistical determination and individual chance that stands for microphysical phenomena. In a pack of 52 cards the chances of any player taking a particular card, say, hearts Ace is $1/52$. If there are 8 players, the chances of hearts Ace turning up into the hands of any of them are on the aggregate $3/52$, against $1/52$, the primary individual chance, which is not affected by the increase in the number of players. The group-chance however rises until when the players are 52, there is the certainty of one or other taking hearts ace. Even if the number increases beyond 52, the certainty is unaffected, for there is no degree of probability greater in the calculus beyond certainty. None can say however whether any particular hand holds hearts Ace or not. The group result is predictable while the micro-physical phenomenon represented by the individual player is indeterminate. Taking into account all the cards in the pack and a varying number of players, the probability of particular cards or combinations reaching particular hands becomes more and more difficult of prediction while the totality effects remain calculable. Toss up one maund-weight of coins e.g. pies, let them fall scattered on the ground. The applicability of the calculation of chances to events enables the prediction that 50% have their heads shown

up, and the remainder the reverse. But as to the behaviour of any particular coin, the law is undetermined. It is free to show up head or the reverse. We are left with chance to guess correctly about it. "The macrophysical phenomena which our sense organs show us are collective phenomena. They are the average result of a large number of microphysical individual particles and processes." The laws which the former follow are only expressions of average effects, the regularity of which *might* be quite compatible with a certain lawlessness of the latter." Statistical regularities may not involve the causal determination of microphysical phenomena. If science has not formulated laws of dynamics of individual coins, does it signify the abandonment of the case into the care of god? The behaviour of a coin is not undetermined, but the mass, the spin, the direction, velocity, gravity, pressure amid others if these factors may be accounted for properly, a prediction may become possible, even as a player knows the effect of a stroke on the billiard ball. To take another instance, the winning ticket in the Irish Hospital Sweepstakes, is one among the millions that are gathered in drums, and mixed together by blasts of air under electrically driven fans. The calculus of probabilities carries it no further than one over several millions for the denominator. If every ticket-holder were scientifically minded, he knows that his chances are very small,

in the limit equal to zero. From this point of hope to the certainty of winning by prediction is indeed a very long way. No wonder the actual winner sees the hand of God which millions of his disappointed retinue fail to discern. Yet the sequence of events from the issue of tickets to the selection of the winner is a succession of physical scenes, determined by material antecedents. If we were not able to trace the march of the triumphant counterfoil from the printing press, through the issuing office, to the innocent purchaser, from thence back to the mixing drums to be blown up and tossed down in air blasts, its vicissitudes by land and sea and in the air, in post boxes, mail-bags, and trucks, now consigned in dark prison, now released for breath, it is not the deficient science that disabled the prediction, but our lack of material for judgment.

Planck's Quantum theory as well as Einstein's Relativity is no witness for physical indeterminism. The tenacious adherence of Einstein to the causal principle was already referred to. The former in "The Universe in the light of modern physics" raises causality to *a priori* level familiar to Kant. Heisenberg, Bohr and others introduced an Uncertainty into physics which Exner restricts to individual microphysical phenomena as distinct from the group results, based on average of statistical determination.

(To be concluded).

FREEMASONRY.

5. The Knights Templars and others.

There is a good deal of imitation Knight-Templary in Freemasonry. The order of Knights Templars, founded in 1118, was a league of soldier-priests pledged to poverty and celibacy, and sworn to protect Christian pilgrims and to defend the Temple at Jerusalem against the Saracens. The order grew very rapidly, gaining great possessions, and in a few years the humble Templar banner, showing two penniless knights riding on one horse, flew over many large castles and rich manors, both in Palestine and all over Europe.

Religious orders founded on strict rules of poverty and humility invariably accumulate great wealth. A pretence is kept up that the members of the order are still in their original state of great poverty, having, in fact, no worldly possessions at all. The rich estates, fine trappings, and luxurious viands belong, not to the individuals, but to the Order. Thus is the best made of both worlds. This process happened to the Templars, and within the lifetime of the founder, Hugo de Paganis, the independence, pride, riches, and immorality of the holy Templar knights were a byword all over Europe.

The Templars had reason for their arrogance and independence. Their organisation gave them an unassailable position among the motley feudal forces of Christendom. Whatever happened, they gained in power and influence. They paid no taxes on all their rich possessions, and were subject to none but their Grand Master. They were one body, bound by vows of secrecy and

obedience. Even the Church, so all powerful in those days, had no control over them. The soldier-priests owed no allegiance to the diocesan bishop, and any offences committed by a Templar were tried by his own Chapter. They confessed their sins only to each other, and thus kept their affairs from the prying lay priesthood. Even the Assassines unique system of government by secret terrorism was ineffective against the Templars. A murdered Grand Master was immediately replaced by another, and his loss did not influence the policy of the Chapter by a hairsbreadth.

The Templars and Assassines were the freelances of the Holy Wars, and when each had discovered the strength of the other, they prosecuted their campaigns on a system of mutual toleration and even open alliance. Whatever the fortunes of war these two heretical bodies, Christian and Moslem, respectively reaped an advantage.

For the Templars had become heretical. They were no longer orthodox Christians. They had acquired, from their contact with the East, and particularly from their allies the Assassins, a distinctive mystical, pantheistic creed, and the secrecy and discipline of their order permitted its growth unchecked.

Heresy was the one unforgivable offence in mediaeval Europe. Readers of Shaw's "St. Joan" will understand the reasonable but quite inexorable views of the Church of Rome in this matter. The secret rites of the Templars exposed them to the vengeance of their enemies

and they had many enemies. The Kings of Europe hated this order which occupied so many rich lands but recognised no authority and paid no taxes. The nobles hated them for their pride, the people hated them for their overbearingness. Philip the Fair, King of France, hated them in particular, for they had refused him admission to their order.

In 1307 the Pope was a prisoner of Philip's at Avignon. Philip, having collected his evidence, procured a Papal Bull, issued to all the sovereigns in Europe, ordering that all Templars were to be arrested and tried for heresy and their property confiscated. All over Europe, the authorities joyfully despoiled the Templars and seized their rich possessions, but in most countries the trials for heresy were perfunctory, and the ruined knights were allowed to vanish into obscurity.

In France, however, the full edict was rigidly enforced. Hundreds of knights were tried, tortured, and executed. It is from the evidence given at the trials, and the confessions elicited under torture, that our present knowledge of the Templars is derived. The 18th Century speculative masons gained their information about templary from the same source, and jumbled it in with the rest of their rites, regardless of consistency. Thus, the Mahommedan influences in modern freemasonry derive from the Assassins. The Templars picked up some scraps of mystical Moslem thought and ritual from the Assassins, and the "gentlemen philosophers" of the 18th century reconstructed the scraps from the records of the Templars' trials.

The practices for which the Templars were condemned, and of which they were undoubtedly guilty, were rather numerous.

In the initiation ceremony they were required to deny Christ who was described as "the thief on the cross." This really meant that Christ was not the Most High God, and by representing himself as the Infinite, instead of a mere aspect of the Deity, he was an impostor. The Templars also trampled on the cross and spat on it. The mystical significance of this was that the cross, the emblem of man's passions, must be spurned by the seeker after Truth. To the mediaeval Christian, however, it was simply horrible blasphemy, and no doubt many of the knights themselves did not suppose it to be anything else. One, however, made the ingenious defence that the cross was spurned only because it was the instrument of the suffering of the Christian Saviour. This trampling on a cross was originally part of the 1st degree of masonry, but now it has been altered into an unobtrusive form. When the Apprentice takes his first "regular step" as a mason, he treads out the path of a cross.....meaning a phallic cross, that he is treading his own guilty passions underfoot.

The Templars wore a seven-stranded scarlet cord, invested during initiation and never afterwards removed. The origin of this idea is obvious, and the Church was quite right in suspecting its heretical significance. When confessing their sins to each other, they used an irregular form of absolution, which was regarded as condoning unnatural vice. Unnatural practices were certainly common among them, and was excused by an ingenious philosophical sophistry.

The chief article of their accusation, however, was what the prosecution described as a "perverted sacrament." This was a rite similar to the Holy Communion

of the Christians, in which wine, or blood, was drunk from a skull. This skull was the emblem of the central legend of the Templars—the usual solar myth legend of death and resurrection. The hero of the legend was a knight who crept into a graveyard and violated the corpse of a beautiful woman, who had tragically died. Nine months later an awful voice from the heavens ordered the knight to return to the tomb, and between the leg-bones of the corpse he found a skull. The awful voice told him that out of death came life, and skull was a token of immortality, which he must always keep and guard as a talisman. The Templars got this idea from Egypt, for in Egyptian mythology it is Isis who throws herself on the dead body of the murdered Osiris, and in consequence bears the boy-savior Horus. The Freemasons introduced this skull into their rites, and the mystical lesson of the skull. They drank out of it, too, until Victorian times, when the prevailing squeamishness put a stop to it. American lodges, however, still drink the “Cup to the Valiant” out of this skull.

The first Templar penalty has been adopted by the craft. It is that the soul of the traitor shall have neither peace nor rest till Judgement Day; his dishonoured body shall lie in ground that can never be consecrated; he shall suffer eternal torment, wandering for ever in the void in eternal suspended anguish. The Templars were stripped naked during initiation. Their temples were round, and a sentry kept guard on the tiles: hence the masonic “tyler” or guard. The masonic seal and banners have been copied from the Templars. At one point of the ritual, the knights had to kiss the Master *in ano*; this was supposed to be a sign of humility and obedience. The masons introduced this idea into the

degree of Prussian Knight, but again the squeamishness of Victorian days insisted that that bit should be watered down. Nowadays, the knights merely kiss the pommel of the sword of the Grand Commander.

Somewhat later additions to Freemasonry were copied from the Egyptian Book of the Dead. This papyrus is, firstly, an account of what befalls the soul after death, and secondly a ritual of the Mysteries of the ancient Egyptian priesthood. It revealed the inwardness of the male and female emblems in their various mystic forms. The emblems of the lesser mysteries included the present masonic rough and perfect ashlar cubes, squares, iron trowels, lead plummets, stone trestle-boards, the arc of a circle, a serpent, and the Master Mason’s mark. Chapter VII of the Book of the Dead deals with the soul’s desire for light, and Chapter XC gives the First Penal Sign of a Freemason. In Chapters XXVII and XXVIII, the soul passes through the Underworld with a veil of darkness over its head, encounters terrors, passes through the Valley of the Shadow, ascends seven steps, and gains the Circle of Princess, where it is consoled and sustained with refreshment. Here again, then, we have the threadbare old ritual outlined in other connections in previous articles. In these chapters we also meet the traitor who has his Heart Torn Out By Fingers, the Body Burnt to Ashes, the Giving of Bread to the Hungry, and the Step that is Left Foot First.

The mystery of the Cross and the Rose, the mainstay of the 18th Degree of Freemasonry, appears to have been built up from several of the classical mysteries of antiquity. The 18th Degree is a Greater Mystery. In the lesser myste-

ries, the phallus is always the active male power of creation, and the yoni the passive female power. The cross of the craft degrees is the tau cross, the symbol of creation. Originally it was the reverse way up, to represent the erect phallus, but the Victorian freemasons turned it downwards, except on the apron of the Master of a lodge, where it still typifies his active, masculine function. The members wear the female rose, the emblem of submission. The axe, hammer, and gavel are evolutions of the male symbol. In some degrees there are double and quadruple taus. In the craftlodges only straight lines were permitted originally, and so the yoni of craft lodges is lozenge-shaped. An ingenious unobtrusive combination of the two symbols is the masonic squares and compasses.

The cross and rose of the 18th degree are, by contrast, mystic emblems. The cross is the cross of divine love, the spiritual male essence of the godhead, and the rose is the female essence, the preservative spirit in nature, and the spiritual life of man himself. This degree is work on a Christian "high church" plane, but is in fact a blatant crib from the Book of the Dead, the particulars of the ritual having been already outlined above.

6. The Ancient and Accepted Rite.

It will be convenient to close this series of articles with a very brief summary of the thirty-three degrees of freemasonry, and of some of the "side orders". Some of these degrees are only nominal in English lodges, but in others they are all worked in full. Only the very briefest comment is possible in a short article.

1. Entered Apprentice. 2. Fellow Craft. 3. Master Mason.

These are the "craft degrees" worked by the ordinary "craft lodge". They have already been described.

4. Secret Master. 5. Perfect Master. 6. Intimate Secretary.

In 4 and 5, the lodge is in mourning because of the death of H. A. B., and work is suspended. Meanwhile the candidate is taught the significance of the articles of worship in the Temple (a list taken from the Bible). A "voice" warns the candidate not to aspire to anything for which he is unfit. While undergoing instruction, in degree 6, the candidate hears King Solomon quarrelling with King Hiram about the payment for the work on the temple. He eavesdrops and overhears a Secret. He is caught, and learns the fate of an eavesdropper. At the last moment the King pardons him, but because of the knowledge he has gained, the King has to make him Intimate Secretary.

7. Provost and Judge. 8. Intendant of the Buildings.

In 7 the candidate is instructed and invested, and given the keys to the Holy of Holies. Approaching this, he makes the Five Steps of Exactness, and beholds the Great Light containing the Three Mysterious Characters. He is now able to take charge of the building and recommence the work.

9. Knight Elect of Nine.

The candidate discovers a criminal violating the tomb of H. A. B., slays him, and bring the head to the King. But he has wrong again, and has a lesson on Tolerance and Good Order. He must not take the law

into his own hand. The candidate, however, once more escapes the death that should be the penalty of his hastiness.

10. Knight Elect of Fifteen.

Fifteen Knights hunt down the accomplices of the criminal of the last degree. They are brought to trial, and upon conviction make excellent soliloquies after the manner of the "last dying confession" of famous 18th Century malefactors.

11. Sublime Elect. 12. Grand Master Architect.

The candidate is elected to have charge of one of the divisions of the work. He is instructed in architecture; the accessories are five columns of architecture and a case of mathematical instruments. This degree is scientific and philosophical in tone, an excellent piece of work by one of the early "speculative" gentlemen.

13. Royal Arch of Enoch.

Enoch (3,000 B. C.) recorded the True Secrets on two pillars. Digging under the foundations of Solomon's Temple, fragments of one of the pillars are discovered. The candidate is lowered into the pit and returns with fragments of the secrets.

14. Scotch Knight of Perfection.

The Master is Solomon. Nine knights, attempting to discover the secrets of Solomon's lodge of Perfection, are buried by the collapse of nine arches leading to his sanctum. This is the fate of the unworthy who aspire to Perfection. Re-excavating the arches, more fragments of the pillar of Enoch are discovered, revealing more secrets. The Master has behind him a Burning Bush enveloping a triangle, with the Awful Letters (Hebrew characters AUM) in the midst.

The brothers, when seated from a mystic triangle.

15. Knight of the Sword. 16. Grand Prince of Jerusalem.

These degrees concern the Second Temple, which the knights build sword in one hand and trowel in other. Part of the action takes place at the court of Darins in Persia, where the Princes are invested. Both degrees were taken straight out of the Bible.

17. Knight of the East and West.

This is by the same author as 15 and 16, and is taken out of the Book of Revelation. The accessories exactly follow the vision of St. John. In the East is a throne on seven steps, supported by four lions and four eagles, a six-winged angel between. There are seats for the Ancients and canopies for the Wardens. In the East is a book with seven seals, in the centre a man with seven stars, a two-edged sword in his mouth, and seven candlesticks around him. The candidate goes through the Vision and learns the password for the next degree.

18. Knight of the Pelican and Eagle, and Sovereign Prince Rose Croix of Heredom.

This is the most important degree in freemasonry. In England it is High Church and confined to professing Christians, but, as has already been related, it is merely a plagiarism of the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

19. Grand Pontiff. 20. Grand Master ad Vitam.

This is a continuation of 17, by the same author, still following Revelation. It deals with the building of the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse, 20, which continues the story, is a chaotic and

unintelligible compilation by another hand. It was invented by some member of the Kilwinning Lodge in Scotland who, in the early days of controversy, wanted to prove that his was the old original article. It claims that the Third Temple was built by "Christian Masons" who migrated to Kilwinning, and this lodge will eventually build the New Jerusalem of Revelation.

21. Prussian Knight.

The history of this degree has already been given. While all the other degrees of freemasonry are solar in type, this degree is founded on a North German cult of lunar type. The Grand Lodge which admitted the degree did not know the difference.

22. Prince of Libanus.

The wood for Solomon's Temple came from Mount Lebanon. This is a carpentering degree!

23. Chief of the Tabernacle. 24. Prince of the Tabernacle.

These two degrees are founded on Exodus XXIX and XI, with strong Cabbalistic influences, conferring on the candidate the inner mysteries of the priesthood. The ornaments are as described in the Bible, and some of the details are borrowed from the Vision of Zechariah. The candidate undergoes an ordeal in an obscure chamber which contains an altar, three skulls, and a skeleton. The members wear cloth of gold and coronets. The candidate at last learns the Awful Name.

25. Knight of the Brazen Serpent.

This is based on Numbers, XXI, 6-9. Moses placed a serpent on a tau, and to be saved, one had to look up and say "Hathatha". This is a dramatic idea

which of late years has appealed to the Salvation Army.

26. Scotch Trinitarian.

This is a highly philosophical degree, but very confused and illogical. Innumerable changes are rung upon the idea of a trinity.

27. Grand Commander of the Temple.

A badly-guessed reproduction of the investiture of a Knight Templar Commander.

28. Knight of the Sun and Prince Adept.

This, the Key to Masonry, and for long the highest degree, is supposed to provide perfect initiation. The degree teaches the doctrine of natural religion, and explains all the masonic symbols, previously seen but not understood. The candidate journeys from a grotto, in the centre of which is a column with a chain. He is warned that if he has not perfectly subdued all his passions, he must flee from the ordeal. At last he reaches a room with a large illuminated globe, the Sun, from which flows all life and philosophic principles.

The remaining degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Rite are high honours reserved for wealthy, noble, and royal patrons, the Arc, Knight of Saint Andrew, Grand Elected Kadosh, Grand Inspector, Inquisitor Commander, Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret, and Sovereign Grand Inspector Commander.

The "Additional" degrees do not call for much comment. The Mark degrees are concerned with the employment and significance of masons' marks. Some additional degrees were founded because the ordinary lodges were found too "cliquey" and unbrotherly, and some

members desired a smaller and more friendly private lodge for themselves. The Royal Arch, communicating the true secrets of a master mason, has already been discussed. Other degrees are highly mystic, and in these the candidate is in the spirit world all the time.

The Rosierucian Society deserves special mention. It was founded by a notorious German rogue and impostor who called himself Rosencrantz, or Rosy Cross. He forged a manuscript supposed to contain the secrets of a mediaeval society of magicians, and had it printed. The book has an enormous sale, and Rosencrantz made a fortune. People all over Germany founded Rosierucian societies according to the instructions contained in the book. Soon, however, Rosencrantz was discredited, and the societies died away.

A hundred years later, a copy of Rosencrantz's book fell into the hands of the arch-impostor Cagliostro. This man started his career by robbing a jeweller, and had to flee from Italy to England. He joined a masonic lodge, and seeing the possibilities of freemasonry, he invented a brand of his own called Egyptian Freemasonry, with himself as Grand Cophta. He travelled all over Europe founding Egyptian lodges, and

collecting the contributions of the faithful. He posed as a physician, and professed to be able to turn lead into gold, and made enormous sums out of noble and avaricious patrons. Eventually, however, he came to grief over the famous theft of the necklace of Marie Antionette a fraud that hastened the French Revolution. Ruined, he disowned freemasonry and accepted a small pension from the Pope. Later, however, he was detected in practising magic again in order to earn trifling sums. He was arrested by the Inquisition as a recusant, and never heard of again.

He had, however, introduced Rosierucianism to English freemasons during his stay in England, and the society still flourishes. This society practises astrology with all the zeal and childish superstition of those Indian gentlemen who are prepared to draw up your horoscope for five rupees, or how much have you got. A Rosierucian, however, must be a professing Christian. The first degree, Zealator, by the way, was cribbed by the original Rosencrantz from the twelfth degree of the rite of Memphis.

EMBUSQUE.

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A SUBSTITUTE FOR RELIGION*

By PROF. T. A. BENDART.

The usual accusation addressed to the modern independent thinker by representatives of the religions, including the Christian religion, is: "You propose to take from the weak and the poor, from the persecuted and the oppressed, from the suffering and the weary, the hope and the faith that there is an almighty God who cares for them and who hears their prayers and grants them; who stands ready to avenge their suffering and turn injustice into justice. You propose to take from the orphan and from the widow the living hope that there is a God who stands ready to be a father to the one and a protector to the other. You propose to deprive fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, of the hope that they shall be united again with those whom death has taken from them. You propose to take from all the hope of a resurrection from the dead and of a life everlasting. Have you a substitute to offer for these religious beliefs which give so much strength to untold thousands to bear their misery, and so much solace in the hour of death?"

And the answer of the modern thinker, what is it? Is it deceptive and evasive? Is it vague and uncertain, or is it positive and reassuring, self-evident and convincing? Let the answer speak for itself.

I

The modern thinker dismisses the idea that there is a personal being, omnipotent and at the same time full of mercy,

love, and compassion for man; he dismisses the belief that there is a creator of the universe as we see it and as we experience it, for the simple reason that the existence of a perfect creator calls for the existence of a perfect universe, a perfect, flawless creation, including man.

Modern scientific research, on the other hand, assures us that the universe as we see it and experience it, the units of our planetary system, including our earth, are far from perfect; that the universe, that this earth of ours, far from being a finished creation, is still in the making. And the evidence? Earth tremors, earthquakes, eruptions, rising and sinking coastlines, the gradual carrying of mountains into the sea by erosion continued throughout ages, the making of valleys where there have been mountains and of mountains where there have been valleys before; all this having gone on through untold ages and to go on through other ages to come. Further evidence? The wanderings of the magnetic poles through the past history of our planet and the wanderings of its mathematical poles as well; the inclination of the earth's axis with regard to the plane of its orbit, this inclination giving rise to the so-called seasons and through them to atmospheric and climatic changes which in turn have been the cause of untold calamities and sufferings to the human race.

Conclusion? This earth cannot be the outcome of a well-planned, love-conceived

* Reproduced from *The Truthseeker*, November 1932.

scheme, for the simple reason that every creature, plant or animal, including man, is forced by necessity, in order to live to destroy and to devour another creature, higher up or lower down in the scale of organic life. What the modern unprejudiced thinkers really see going on in nature is a merciless slaughter, a regardless killing, a brutal struggle for supremacy in order to exist at the expense of the weaker, less resistant; each one of these thousands of different species of plants and animals, including man, striving and struggling to assert its apparent right to maintain existence, for the mere love of life. A God who is imagined by man to be perfect love certainly has no place in a world like this. And now this man-made God, the outcome of centuries of human thinking along wrong lines, lies shattered at our feet. The modern thinker assures the believer that there is no such a thing as God who incorporates perfect wisdom, justice, and love in his personality; that there is no such thing as a superior being ruling the destinies of that insignificant mite called man. And the believer shudders! He looks into an open chasm, without hope, because the very foundations of his social order seem to have been taken from under his feet. But now comes the modern thinker's answer, most assuring, most concise, most comforting and vitalizing:—

Nothing is as yet lost; on the contrary, all is won. For the perfect wisdom which you, the deceived believer, have thought to reign beyond the stars is *in you*. Nothing is as yet lost, but all is won; for the perfect justice, for which you have been looking somewhere beyond and behind and above the universe, is in reality in you. Nothing is as yet lost,

but everything is won, because the perfect love which you so long have imagined to rule the universe, this world of ours, and the destinies of frail, erring man, this love is in you. What you throughout all these thousands of years of thinking have really done is to project that which slumbers *in you* along illogical and irrational lines of thinking into the outside world, into and beyond the universe. You have all these thousands of years laboured under a tremendous error; but now that you want to correct this error all you have to do is to call forth this spark of wisdom and raise it from the lower and lowest to higher and highest levels. All you want to do now is to make it perfect through wisely directed education of your mental faculties and of those of the coming generations. All you have to do now is to call forth this spark of justice, this sense of fairness, and fan it into a mighty flame that will devour all rubbish of human injustice and human unfairness, until all racial, all social, and all economic inequalities and unevennesses are levelled off, until all prejudices have been eradicated from the face of the earth, and until perfect justice reigns. All you have to do is to call forth from its hiding-place, deep down in your bosom, that noblest, most sublime, happiest of all traits of man—love, “divine” love if you choose to call it so. It is, to begin with, a most tender, most frail bud, which the slightest breath of poisonous selfishness may kill. It takes all the human justice this race is capable of to protect this tender, supersensitive bud of human love from extermination. Human wars have tried their inhuman best to annihilate it and kill it at the roots. But human wisdom, combined with human justice, has so far shielded it, and shall continue to shield it until the bud has

developed into a shoot, and the shoot into a mighty tree in whose shadow the weak and the weary, the tainted and the outcast, shall seek comfort and rest, and shall find them.

II

The modern thinker dismisses the idea of the immortality of the soul, of a life beyond the grave, for the simple reason that there is not the slightest evidence for such a belief; that, on the other hand, all the evidence offered by the multitude of organic life as we see it, and as we experience it, is in favour of the postulate that death, natural death as well as violent death in any form, is as a matter of fact the end of all life, including the life of man. The modern thinker knows very well that in olden times man deemed himself so far above the rest of the creation that he thought only he himself, *homo sapiens*, was endowed with a "soul," the "breath of God." Later on, however, as man paid more attention to animal life and made animal behaviour the subject of his studies, especially in more recent times, he began to admit that animals also, especially, the higher animals, are endowed with a soul; while some have even gone so far as to claim a soul, or at least something similar to a soul, for certain plants of a higher order, the so-called sensitive plants.

And now the neurologist, who makes it his especial subject to inquire into the workings of the nervous system of man and the higher animals and into the workings of their brains as well, also into the pathology of this nervous system and that of the brain, human and animal, comes along and assures the believer that the so-called "soul" is nothing more nor less than the nervous system

itself, and that in so far as an organic being has a nervous system it also has a soul. Therefore, he concludes, when the nervous system dies the soul dies with it. As a matter of fact, he asserts, the soul and the nervous system are one and the same thing. As to the origin of this so-called "soul," a question which has occupied the minds of thinkers since the race began to think about the whence and the whither of existence, and which has called forth the most fantastic speculations, the answer of the modern thinker is very simple indeed. The soul begins when the nervous system begins, or very soon after, and the nervous system begins when in all sexually produced animals, including man, the spermatozoon of the male fertilizes the ovum of the female, or very soon after this phenomenon has taken place. The modern thinker, of course, cannot harmonize this view with the doctrines of the old psychology schools. He discards for the same reason all metaphysics, and assures us that the entire science of psychology of the old masters needs to be re-written to bring it in line with the results of research work in neurology and in physics.

But what, we ask, has the modern thinker to offer the believer, whose belief he so cruelly proposes to destroy by proclaiming that there is no beyond the grave; that there cannot be a resurrection from the dead, nor for this reason any reunion with those who were dearest to us here on earth and whom we yearn to see again face to face? What solace has the modern thinker to offer the poor mother and the bereaved father who look down into the open grave that soon will swallow up forever what meant to them life and love and happiness? Has

he no word of comfort to offer; no inspiration to convey, nothing that might stop the flow of bitter tears?

The answer is one which to appreciate in its full bearings requires a total remodelling of the conventional aspect of death so long maintained by the race. It will require the united efforts of the most advanced human minds to educate the mass-mind of man, especially that of the coming generations, to think of death as something perfectly natural, as the natural outcome and end of a natural life, so far as death from old age is concerned; to think of death so far as it is brought about by disease as something that can be prevented by wise precautions, and that can be fought, perhaps successfully, by known methods of anti-toxic treatment; to think of death occasioned by accident in traffic or in manufacturing activities as something that also can be prevented by drastic safety measures. The present upgrowing generation and the generations to come will be educated to look upon death caused by wars between nations as something that can be made entirely impossible through a concert of nations and an international peace conference.

Here at this point the Evolution theory comes in, not as a curse, as the Fundamentalists assure us, but as a blessing, teaching the unprejudiced that none of those vices and passions of which man is the ashamed possessor is produced in him by an outward evil, supernatural power over which he has no control, but that they are in the last analysis traits which have been inherited from the lower animals from which man is descended. It is proper and early training of the child that brings its fruit in riper manhood and womanhood.

And even if we ourselves should not be able to muster courage enough to practise what we preach, our children and our children's children will, through accumulated practice and habit, be strong enough to smile even in the presence of death, at the sick bed, at the bier, and at the grave; strong enough to face death without despair, without hopeless grief and sorrow. They will be hallowed by the dignity of death.

What has the modern thinker to offer as a substitute for a god-made law—such, for instance, as the Mosaic law of the Jews (accepted also by the Christians) pretends to be? The answer? In the first place, the modern thinker assures the believer that as a matter of fact there never has been such a thing as a god-made law; that, on the contrary, laws presented to the people as god-made were in reality made by the priest caste, which, in order to secure backing and enforcement, told the people that they were inspired and "given" by the deity. They at the same time invented a "hell" such as Christians and Mohammedans believe in—a hell of "fire and brimstone," a place of eternal torture as the ancient Greeks conceived it, for the everlasting punishment of those who dare to question the divinity of those laws or to transgress them. But, more or less unrealized by the common people, as civilization progressed man-made laws, openly acknowledged as such, began to take the place of the so-called god-made laws, and finally replaced them altogether. It is the duty of the modern thinker to revise these laws whenever and wherever they seem to conflict with man's liberty or rights, and to alter or abolish them to meet new conditions.

To come back once more to the answer given the believer with regard to immortality, the modern thinker finds that his idea that there is no such thing as a life beyond the grave, makes this *only* life so much more precious that we feel in duty bound to use its every fleeting minute to make it worth living. Hence we feel it to be our duty to crowd into this however short span of life all the kindness we are capable of bestowing. Our children will be taught that, on the other

hand, no unkind word or deed can ever be recalled or undone, that no blood can atone for them, and that for this reason they should be avoided.

Thus the modern thinker believes that he has indeed a substitute to offer that may well take the place of any religious belief or dogma that the religions of the earth have fostered. His is the truth indeed, and the truth shall make him free.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

The Holy Year.

His Holiness the Pope has with the usual grandiloquence, announced the year 1933-1934 to be the Holy Year. This is Holy, in commemoration of the centenary of the death of Christ. Christ and all events in his life, above all his death, are important for Christians. Libraries are filled with details of his life and expositions of his teachings, though the only available account consists in a couple of thousand of verses written nearly half a century after his death. The chance of any error in its interpretation is safeguarded by the doctrine of infallibility. *In spite of all this, the Pope with his College of Cardinals is not certain whether Christ died in 33 or 34 A. D.!!* Of course this does not affect the cardinal articles of faith, nor can it ever shake the foundations of a church that is built on a rock. Still, it is a poor piece of research, especially when God's hand directs this. Perhaps, He will one day, at a later date, let us know about it. Now that the Catholics have accepted a sort of Evolution, the knowledge about their God is also bound

to evolve. Yet they grow indignant when one reminds them that both the birth and death of Christ are very uncertain dates.

* * *

Fast-its new role.

Writing at the very end of January, one writes in a freer atmosphere. At the end of December, we were living under Mahatma Gandhi's threat of fasting himself to death. His fast is not a hunger-strike. It is a method of self-purification and self-immolation. Till last year, saints and sadhus fasted to appease Divine Wrath or to flatter the vanity and sadistic kink in the All Loving in order to induce Him to alter the course of certain phenomena on Earth. But Gandhi wishes to do neither of these. He is fully conscious of his position in this country and is just exploiting that feeling to gain his view-point. Being more under the control of his "inner voices", which, according to him, guide him in the most different and difficult times, reason is out of question. His attitude towards the Sanatanists, and the Orthodox has been that of a

bully and of a well-schooled religious debator who argues with you only to convert you and not to be converted himself. The Orthodox and the Untouchables have both maintained a more level head, and positively refused to kill themselves or prevent Gandhi from dying. Gandhi writes to say he respects the sect near his Ashram at Ahmedabad who have been enjoined by the Shastras to thieve, but then he is willing to die to force the orthodox prejudice against the Harijans. Even when the orthodox Hindus are willing to help in the social and political uplift of the depressed classes, and even when the latter are themselves not keen upon temple-entry, Mr. Gandhi wants to purify Hinduism! We wish him luck, but the tide of sympathy for his next fast is fast ebbing out. This is a good sign for a nation, which some time back lost its head on the irrational step of this Mahatma. It is true that political leaders have made capital out of religion in all countries, for instance, Mussolini, to quote only one example, but in our country we attach too much importance to the spiritual. Holy methods of fasting and self-abnegation are a trifle out of date.

* * *

Preventive medicine.

The ravages of plague, small-pox and cholera have been greatly curtailed by the preventive measures that are now so largely adopted. All these are of recent origin. Otherwise an epidemic raged till

it spent itself or killed all those it could possibly kill. The primitive recourse was to magic, which was later elevated to prayer. Thanks to the work of non-believers, the knowledge of science has spread and our Health-Officers do not any more rely on this method. Today small-pox is widely prevalent and all are flocking to the vaccination-centres for protective inoculation. The confidence in vaccination, even among the most ignorant, is certainly great. That is why the special religious festival of the Jains at Poona borders on the ludicrous. This community is wealthy, but still, though it has many persons of repute in the commercial field, is backward in education. The money that was spent that evening could have been better spent on vaccination and inoculation. This is more so, as the poor killed bacteria are impartial and confer immunity on all, while God has a good memory, and feeds fat his ancient grudge on these occasions, though, nevertheless, many of the "holy men" and innocent babes are also affected, but that is because He is inordinately fond of them and can't do without them in Heaven. These special appeals to God are not limited to the Jains: they are found in all religious denominations. And there you see professors of Science, members of council, and professional men, even doctors, crouching before an idol or an image of God, and supplicating for safety. To what a state fear and ignorance can bring us!!

ALI AKBAR.

John Mackinnon Robertson.

—→0←—

(1856-1932.)

There died in London on the 5th of January last the Right Honourable John Mackinnon Robertson at the ripe age of 76. He was born in Scotland in 1856 where he received a very poor education. His schooling was ended by the time he was thirteen but so intelligent was he that he became a leader writer for the *Edinburgh Evening News* when he was only twenty years old. In 1884 he came to London to assist Charles Bradlaugh in the conduct of *The National Reformer*. Later he conducted the *University Magazine*. "From the late 80's until his death he poured out a stream of articles books and pamphlets on a variety of subjects social, political, literary, religious and economic, which when looked at as a whole leaves one amazed at the industry, the research and learning exhibited." This is said of him by Mr. Chapman Cohen, the learned editor of *The Free Thinker*, and every one who knew

the works of the late Mr. Robertson will endorse what Mr. Cohen says of him. He espoused the cause of Rationalism in England from an early age and though this subject in that country is a very unpopular one, Robertson fearlessly expressed his views and opinions on religion and published many books on the subject. From a rationalistic point of view his best books are:—History of Free Thought, Pagan Christs, Christianity and Mythology. He was a frequent contributor to the Literary Guide, the organ of the Rationalist Press Association of London. He was a member of the R. P. A. from its inception and never ceased to work hard for the cause he had at heart. By his death Rationalism has suffered a severe loss and it will be difficult to fill the place of one who was so enthusiastic, even in his old age, so laborious and so well informed in the cause of Rationalism.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

HOW CATHOLICS ARE TAUGHT.

An anonymous correspondent sent us by post a leaflet which is a supplement to "Rays of Light," a Catholic publication. The leaflet, evidently written by a Jesuit, deals with some questions for the benefit of students. These students, whoever they are, must be very innocent

indeed if they accept such answers without submitting the same to careful scrutiny. It begins with the question—"GOD." "Can we know anything for certain?" It answers it thus:—"This question is asked frequently. There is much reason for doubt nowadays, since

we have discovered that men were wrong so often in the past. So many things seemed certain which were later found out to be entirely wrong. Perhaps this is the case with our belief in God—such is the opinion of some today.”

“A traveller once learned the answer in this way. He was travelling on a river boat and stood on deck watching the pilot direct the boat so skilfully and surely. Finally he asked the pilot, ‘I suppose you know all the rocks and sand bars in this river?’ ‘No,’ replied the pilot, ‘but I know where they are not.’ ‘As long as we too stay in the safe deep water that we know, we cannot be mistaken. We are acting like that wise pilot, when we accept the primary truths that are self-evident and in so far superior to anything we prove by arguments; such first principles are. ‘I exist,’ ‘I can know something’. ‘Nothing can at the same time be and not be and every event must have a cause.’

“Built directly upon these self-evident truths are all our valid arguments for the existence of God, so that of this fact too we can be certain. Reasoning in this way we are, as it were, travelling in safe deep water where we simply cannot be mistaken.”

Comment: One must admire the facility with which a Roman Catholic priest disposes a difficult question which has always engaged the minds of eminent thinkers without solution. For the unlearned the existence of God is assumed to be self-evident, and when the writer of that leaflet assures us that it rests on “primary truths that are self-evident,” we begin to wonder whether he is himself as ignorant as the students he wishes to enlighten, or is only trying to throw dust in their eyes, knowing full well that

the proofs of that existence are not as easily demonstrable as he wishes us to imagine. Though the word God is in the mouth of every individual, yet few people are able to provide their own minds with any clear idea of what they are referring to when they use the word “God”. The idea of God of a scientist or a philosopher is certainly not the same as that of an ignorant person. The latter is absolutely cocksure of that existence. For him it is self-evident and his idea of that existence is a superman residing in the heaven above the clouds. For the former, God may only mean an abstraction, something undefinable, the unknowable, or an Universal Mind in the Universe and behind it. The idea of God of the Roman Catholic, of the writer of that leaflet, for instance, is that of the ignorant man. He has inherited it from uncultured people, semi-barbarians who imagined they knew a lot about God, the World, the Devil and the rest. It is on such ideas, those erroneous guesses about the Universe, the Earth and its importance as the centre of the Universe, the relation of a God in the image of man with this world, Man and his after-life destiny, etc. that the Roman Catholic religion has been founded. Disturb any of these erroneous beliefs and the Roman Catholic religion, with all its medieval nonsense, crumples to the ground as it has indeed in the light of modern knowledge. The Roman Catholic God, in effect, is pictured as an old, bearded man, dressed in blue, in the sky. Once upon a time he was very uncouth, cruel, petty, revengeful and jealous and only cared for an insignificant semi-barbarous tribe in a corner of the world. When the Catholics adopted him as their God he had become somewhat regenerated. He was less despotic and exclusive, not so cruel and revengeful but became

something like a father caring for many more than a few of a tribe. But he remained the same magician capable of suspending the laws of nature and performing miracles to prove his omnipotence and majesty. Nowadays, he is absolutely silent in the skies and only speaks mysteriously and privately to his Vicar in Rome. In the skies, where he is surrounded by the elects, generally people in priests' and nuns' garb, he has settled down in a court which is very much like that of an earthly king. In that court he is provided with a throne on which he is seated. On his right sits his only son, and on his left that Mysterious Ghost. The three in One or One in three, attended by the Queen of Heaven, a sort of goddess, and myriads of Angels with wings and harps, rules the Universe and admits no one except Roman Catholics in that divine circle. Such a being is believed to be the Creator of the Universe and all that exists. He is believed to have created this by his magical power out of nothing, quite as recently as six or seven thousand years ago. He is believed to have come down from heaven in the shape of a poor man to suffer a cruel death to redeem his creatures from his own stern decree. An individual who claims that these are "primary truths that are self evident" that prove that existence, must be a credulous being indeed. A brief examination of his primary truths and self-evident proofs will show that he only accepts what is convenient and rejects what is embarrassing. To do this he must necessarily ignore other truths that are even more than self-evident. For instance, in saying that "I exist" is a proof of that existence is simply to ignore what has been accepted as irrefutable. We mean Evolution and not Special Creation. "I exist" does not

necessarily mean that I was created in the manner Christianity teaches. All the proofs and evidences in Nature are against Special Creation, and until one can prove that Evolution is untenable and Special Creation the correct thing, one must reject one of the primary truths on which our friend depends so much. "I can know something." Yes, I do; but I have no assurance about the reality of that existence. All I can do is to guess more or less or to depend upon hearsay (that is revelation) that once upon a time that being is believed to have made to man. "Nothing can at the same time be and not be." This is meaningless in so far as it is an evidence of the existence of God. "Every event must have a cause." Quite so. Every existence must have a cause also. So God being assumed to be an existence must have a cause too. Those who argue that he is an exception to the general rule must convince us why the Universe cannot be eternal and self-sustaining. They must also convince us why Nature could not account for natural events and causes. These difficulties are dismissed by the writer of the leaflet with a facility that amazes one. The fact is that he is no thinker at all and is not prepared to face serious facts likely to upset his belief. This belief is nothing else than the figment of the imagination of those men "who were wrong so often in the past." Instead of being safe in deep waters our friend is only in a fool's paradise.

We have dealt at length with the first question just to show how a Catholic argues and how he can throw dust in the eyes of those who do not know. The rest of the questions and answers are on a par with the above and are even more misleading and dishonest. For instance, it professes to answer in the affirmative

the question whether scientists believe in only one true God. No scientist worthy of his name would commit himself to any affirmative answer on the subject. Yet, the answer in the leaflet is that "the majority and greatest of scientists have always believed in God. A few names are given like Newton (who lived 200 years ago) Pasteur, Faraday, Kelvin, Thomson and Mendel (all lived 50 years ago) Rontgen and Marconi as examples of scientists who believed in "Only one true God." That writer, of course, takes care to conceal the fact that most scientists in all the renowned Universities and colleges in the world are agnostics or atheists and have no such belief about one only true God or a dozen of them. In answer to the question whether great philosophers believe that the existence of only one true God can be known from Reason, the names of Aristotle, Plato, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Leibnitz, Pascal and others of the past are quoted, and among the moderns names of Cardinal Mercier, De Wulf (also a theologian) Maritain, Blondel, Gilson, Gemelli, Sheen (all second or third raters) are paraded. All the same, it may astonish Catholic students to know that even among believing philosophers, who are very few and far between, there is no clear agreement on the question of the existence of God and much less about what sort of a being that God is. St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, two great lights of the Church of Rome,

firmly believed many other things than the existence of God. They believed in the existence of a great devil as cunning as God is wise, and many lesser devils who had frequent sexual intercourse with women. Aquinas was positive as to their existence and he attributed all the evils of the world to their agencies! The rest of the pamphlet regarding the beliefs of such philosophers as Hume, Mill, Spencer and others is too stupid for serious consideration. That scribbler strives to show that even they (all renowned agnostics) were not so positive as regards the non-existence or paucity of evidence in proof of the existence of God. He tries to explain why some philosophers of today say that the existence of God cannot be known from Reason and he thinks that they begin with false notions in philosophical thoughts and finally he reminds his readers that the Catholic Church, through the Pope, teaches that God can be known with certainty by the natural light of human reason. This assurance, one presumes, is simply sufficient for the average ignorant Catholic. He need not inquire further. If the same human reason, however, happens to be too critical and keen, the same church will assure its followers that they must have faith and that in matters of religion faith is above reason. So thought the famous Aquinas. Are not these Catholics adepts in dust throwing?

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE INCIDENCE OF MICRO-PHYSICAL INDETERMINISM

(Modern Physics in relation to Theism.)

(Continued from the February number.)

Professor Eddington draws the logic of indeterminacy from the field of human behaviour, suggesting that atomic indeterminateness may "correspond with what in human behaviour is known as the freedom of willing." Professor Hickson points out that the latter "has never been accepted generally by leading psychologists. For the most part the mathematical and physical free-willists simply ignore the teaching of biology and psychology, and strike one as slightly amateurish in philosophical criticism." Biologists and scientific psychologists like Bertrand Russel, and J. B. S. Haldane refute the analogy put forward by Eddington and his deduction of God from physical indeterminacy. In his article of Modern Physics and Causality, Prof. J. B. S. Haldane established the position against the claim. A modification of the idea of causality does not involve the abrogation of science. "Naturally, those who would like to see the scientific method of tackling the problems restricted to as narrow limits as possible, have welcomed the view that the admitted unpredictability of future events not only implies the breakdown of principle of causality, but leaves an opening for miracles, psychic intervention and the like." But "as a matter of fact, the position now adopted by advanced physicists is not new. It was adumbrated by Hume, and still more clearly by Karl Pearson in his 'Grammar of Science.' As Hume was and Pearson is

an 'infidel,' I hereby warn and caution the faithful against using doctrines so closely akin to their's as supports for religion." Human actions are caused like other events. The basis of rational education and the training of human will rests on that postulate. Theories of modern physics relative to the atom have no bearing on human behaviour, which is at least based on laws of statistical determination. To that extent, the non-determination of human volitions is demonstrably non-existent, and if a free-will universe also were to provide an ethical basis for human conduct, the province of the moral law would be far restricted.

The researches of Sir J. C. Bose into the inner workings of plant-life, his delicately constructed electrical apparatus demonstrating that plants exhibit the beginnings of emotion, and weep, and are afraid, beside possessing the functions of circulation and nerve-impulse, evidence the continuity of life, unifying our knowledge of the properties, including the behaviour, of living matter. The photograph of the hyper-sensitive tympanum of the anxious mother that missed her child amid pilgrim crowds and heard its cry from a distance, while others nearby were least affected, is suggestive of the physical basis for psychological experience. Even metals have life. They too die, a yet further extension of continuity of life. The same strict formulation of the causal

principle that guided Minstern throughout his labours, guides Sir J. C. Bose and Sir C. V. Raman in their researches into life, electricity and light. The Raman-effect in light is no chance hit; it is demonstrable as the studied application of the causality principle.

It is of profound significance that the idea of chance is clutched at by the mathematician and the physicist, more readily than by the biologist and the experimental psychologist. Professor J. B. S. Haldane examines the question of human conduct in some detail and sums up the result of experiments on the body thus: "To-day one can run a needle into one's arm near a nerve, connected up through an amplifier with a loud speaker, and listen into the nervous impulses going down from the brain to the hand when one voluntarily bends a finger. Perhaps in less than a century it will be possible in the same kind of way to observe the same kind of processes associated with consciousness. Already, records have been made of electrical changes in the brain, but we have yet no idea whether the changes so far observed are associated with mental processes." He next considers the behaviour of twins, especially the monozygotic pairs, i. e., those produced from the same fertilised egg. "They are of the same sex, resemble one another physically to a great extent, and if brought up together, behave in a similar way." They receive the same assortment of hereditary material from each parent, i. e. the chromosomes. If separated soon after birth they may behave quite differently. Statistical determination is in favour of similarity if brought up together till the age of eight at least." "Now I do not think any supporter of human indeterminism would take the view that a

pair of twins has only one soul if they are brought up together, "and two if they are separated at birth." "So if science is undermining the belief of certain physicists in causality, it is certainly supporting the same belief as regards biological matters."

Nor is it the special fortune of the physicist that he chanced to hit upon the doctrine of chance, which the biologist had no opportunity of attesting. Take the case of the impregnation of the ovum. The germ-cell of man, the spermatozoon, is a tiny cell. Its size is imagined by remembering that nearly 300,000,000 of similar cells occupy a drop, or globule. One among the vast multitude finds entrance into the female-cell and is united with it. Chemical action, increased vitality, growth, pre-natal evolutionary stages, and birth, and then Socrates, Napoleon, Shakespeare or Newton! Where is the want of opportunity for biological chance? Where may not the Divine Hand come in? And then take the fate of 299,999,999 spermatozoa, that run to waste, closing their career forthwith, any one among which could have rivalled the genius and the potency of the race!

What is after all atomic indeterminateness, the microphysical indeterminism, which has compelled Sir Arthur Eddington to the belief in God. On close analysis it would appear to be no more than the difficulty of observing the behaviour of the particle, or electron without interfering with its motion, or direction, and predicting its course by formulating an accurate law. Even if X-rays are used for the moving particle, it is deflected out of its path in the process. But that is not a valid ground for concluding that the wave itself is indeterminate. This objection to determinism is a restatement

in the field of experimental physics of the objection to introspection as a means of psychological study urged by Comte. Because introspective observation of mental phenomena often disturbs them, or may bring about their cessation, it by no means follows that the examining mind cannot detach itself from the object of observation, even though it be a mental process. "Limits of observation and experimentation do not constitute the limits of thought." If that were so, there would be no thought at all, in the true sense of the word. The process of reasoning, the act of imagining similarity in apparently disconnected events, the framing of the hypothesis, the verification of the same by recognised instances, these proceed further than such limits. "Inability to predict accurately does not invalidate belief in causal relations." The means of investigation interfere with the events to be observed. Hence the difficulty to determine simultaneously the position and the momentum of the microphysical particles. The electron collides with the light quantum and is disturbed. In his provocative work "The Universe of Science" Prof. H. Levy, Professor of Mathematics at the Imperial College of Science, London University, examines the approach to present-day idealism and courageously lays down the true method and aims of Modern Science.

Neither in Einstein's Relativity nor in the Quantum theory is there any basis for the revival of the old doctrine of idealism. Bergson's relativity of perception, the doctrine of creative evolution, which is a contradiction in terms, and his cosmology dependent on subjective intelligence are far removed from the space-time of physics which is modified by the presence of mass. "Space, time and

motion are indeed relative not to a mind, but to certain objective date. The dualism between energy and matter is now transcended, by matter being broken into minute energy-charges, the electrons and protons, photons, and neutrons. Wave-mechanics postulates discontinuous energy conditions as controlling the structure of matter. It is left for future record to chronicle their history, in the light of fresh developments which research promises. Planck, Einstein and other physicists do not support the claims of Sir Arthur Eddington and others of his school of logic that recent advances in physics are subversive of thorough-going determinism which is the bedrock on which all scientific endeavour is founded. The scope of the present subject does not extend to the validity of the theistic conception viewed as a whole. That is a larger question than the mere incidence of microphysical indeterminism to which the present sketch confines itself. A larger survey shows this field in its proper bearings. Grant Allen has traced the evolution of the Idea of God to its humble human fancies. Sir James Fraser in his monumental work "The Golden Bough" has established the continuity of religious belief and ritual from the earliest times of the human dawn, and in every degree of latitude and meridian. Crawley, in the Mystic Rose, suggests how ignorance of the nature of some of the human urges, e. g., of sex and of birth may have endowed mere physiological functions with religious sanctity. The phenomenon of death is, if anything, of greater consequence in the moulding of religious faith. The study of anthropology and comparative religion has brought into relief the introspective attitude with

regard to the cornerstone of supernaturalism. God, in general, or the particular God of the Christian, Mahomedan, Hindu or other forms of creed has transformed Himself from being the inspirer of revelation into a fit subject for treatment by the process of historical research. New departments of science are emerging into life to corroborate the world-view point of physical cosmology. Zoology, palaeontology, &c. are everyday confirming our knowledge of the beginnings of the earth and of man on it. Man is to-day fighting God to wrench truth out of his hand, even as the son fights the father for just inheritance. J. S. Haldane (the father, the elder Haldane) relies on the fact that life cannot be explained in terms of physics, and declines on that ground, to accept Materialism as an adequate formula of cosmology. "But the fundamental concepts of physics are indeed in a state of flux" as Professor Hickson put it. Or as the son, Professor J. B. S. Haldane, says: "Science will of course revise its cosmology. It will probably adopt a queerer and queerer world-view as time goes on." "But it does not involve the abandonment of the essential physical standpoint, that events can be predicted by the use of quantitative (i. e. material) reasoning about things which exist whether we know them or not." "If it continues to fulfil its function of enabling man to predict or control events, it will never return to a world-view which failed in both these respects." It is

obvious that the capacity for such prediction and control of events is excluded by the acceptance of chance, caprice, accident, or indeterminacy as an element in cosmology.

If the consolidated survey-plan of knowledge is against supernaturalism, it only remains to say a word regarding its outgrowth in a few obscure fields. Metaphysical and religious psychologists eagerly avail themselves of every limitation of causality. While the mathematical physicist is puzzled over the question of the position of the electron, he has a vague idea of the existence of free-will often maintained in theological discussion. He naturally draws upon his genius for analogy and postulates indeterminacy to physical particles. The theist takes his cue, and ergo, he argues, scientific causation is at an end, not only in psychological but even in the physical world. Meantime, the biologist and the experimental psychologist are delving into the recesses of cerebral physiology, to carry the process of unification into the relation between matter and mind, just as the physicist has already carried into the relation of matter and energy. While the doctrine of free-will stands fair chance of being rejected by biologists, it would be futile on the part of physicists to build upon its analogy any principle of microphysical indeterminism, and much more so, on the part of the theist's to rear a storey for supernatural providence.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

THE SILENT SCEPTIC.—AN APPEAL TO HIM.

"The world would be astonished if it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments, of those most distinguished even in popular estimation for wisdom and virtue, are complete sceptics in religion." This declaration by John Stuart Mill, the utilitarian philosopher, in his Autobiography some three generations ago, is as true now as it was then. Indeed the proportion of such sceptics must be considerably greater. Far too many leaders of their fellow men, who are perfectly well aware of the truth, refrain, as Mill points out, for various motives from speaking out. Sceptics in religion, distinguished and undistinguished, are spread over the whole globe—their name is legion—but the vast majority of them display this same reticence and same fainéant attitude towards Freethought propaganda. The aid which they refuse or fail to proffer would make all the difference to the progress of Rationalism. It may be worth while, therefore, to probe into the reasons for their conduct and see if there is anything that might alter it. I may mention that, the person who knows the truth about the supernatural religions but is unwilling that others should come to know it, has always intrigued me and, in my quest for the underlying motive, I have had quite a number of personal experiences especially when engaged in propaganda work.

It is unemotional reasoning not emotional charitableness inspiring me when I say that I have come to the conclusion that the attitude of these secret atheists, agnostics and pseudo-believers (to be

found in their thousands in Christendom, India, Turkey, China and Japan) springs more often than not from a genuine conviction that this or that religion however saturated with absurd superstitions, is beneficial and necessary. The more or less sordid motive (vested interests, etc.) is not, as one is liable to assume, the main one. Altruism rather than egotism is the determining factor. This, if I am correct in my estimate, is an important point. Open the eyes of these altruists, prove to their satisfaction that they are in error—that the diametrically opposite is the fact and the same spirit which dictated their silence regarding the truth will urge them, as it urges you and me, to proclaim it. On the other hand, were egoism predominant, we should be up against something very different. We should be engaged in an unequal struggle with those who batten on men's gullibility and for whom the preservation of false beliefs, however pernicious, is a *sine qua non*. We may congratulate ourselves therefore that such as these are by no means representative of the average sceptic of today.

I grant that besides the high motive I claim to be so general, a less exalted one may be present. My personal experience is, however, that this modicum of egoism seldom amounts to more than a natural dislike for controversy or an aversion to giving distress or displeasure to others, conventionalism, and so on. It must be remembered, too, that religious persecution, though thanks to Rationalism no longer bathed in blood, is still with us. Thus the sceptic is often so placed that

unless he is prepared to be a martyr, he must keep his convictions to himself. He cannot afford, for example, to lose his job or be ruined in his profession or trade. Again his wife may not share his views and so his domestic happiness is at stake. Egoism, if it can be called by that name, springing from such causes is understandable and pardonable and is not going to prevent him from seizing the first opportunity to give a helping hand to Rationalism when he has realized that it is his duty to do so.

As it is, at present, our silent sceptic who knows of the absurdities of religion knows little or nothing of their enormities. His (or her) blood has never boiled with indignation, as yours and mine has, in visualizing the horrors in the train of every one of these false superstitions as well in the recent as in the remote past: horrors which would be renewed were Rationalism defeated.

"The great antagonist of intolerance is not humanity, but knowledge" (Buckle's "History of Civilization in England", Vol. 1, pp. 188-9) and Rationalism's task is to spread it. "A careful study of the history of religious toleration will prove, that in every Christian country where it has been adopted, it has been forced on the Clergy by the authority of the secular classes" (idem, p. 337).] Doubtless every one of these sceptics is aware that for many centuries of the Christian era there was a ghastly institution called the Inquisition, but does he know that even now, according to Catholic principles laid down in the Catholic Encyclopædia, all this torturing, killing, and maiming is by no means condemned by the Church of Rome? Only the Protestant Churches who were equally bloodthirsty are now definitely contrite. Then, again, what

does this silent sceptic know of the hideous cruelties, at their zenith in the 16th and 17th centuries, occasioned by the belief in witch-craft and perpetrated alike by Protestants and Catholics? Does he realize that this belief is so much part and parcel of that Bible teaching to which his silence gives assent that as late as 1768 we find Wesley stating that to give up the belief in witch-craft was in effect giving up the Bible?!

No! it is only fair to assume that this silent person, woman or man, can have little or no knowledge of how human happiness and progress has suffered from religions and their exponents and ministers. He or she can never have read works—I select those referring chiefly to the Christian religion—so enlightening as Buckle's "History of Civilization in England", Lecky's "The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe", Robertson's "A Short History of Christianity", Haynes "Religion and Persecution", McCabe's "The Bible in Europe", the same Author's "The Popes and their Church", Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner's "The Christian Hell" (obtainable from Watts & Co. for nine pennies!), Chapman Cohen's "Religion and Sex" (Chap. X deals with the Witch Mania) or, to mention the most recent, Van Loone's "The Liberation of Mankind", Paranjpye's "The Crux of the Indian Problem" and Sir Alexander Cardew's article "The Principles and Practice of Persecution" in the R. P. A. Annual for this year. Certainly he can never have read journals likely to keep him *au fait* with the baneful effects of the Christian superstition. He has not come in touch with and probably never heard of, much less subscribed to, illuminative journals such as "The Literary Guide" or "The Free-thinker" or "The New York Truht

Seeker." (The last mentioned being supported as usual only by the unmonied had to cease publication this year owing to the depression. No free thought journal in England or America is self-supporting!)

When, as McCabe points out in the Preface to "The Bible in Europe", obviously sceptical writers urge that the maintenance of religion is essential to the maintenance of civilization; when they solemnly repeat—how they can do so is beyond my comprehension except on the assumption of their ignorance of Christianity's *true* history—that the Bible is the source of England's greatness; is it any wonder that other unbelievers of less culture also give their sympathy to the clergy rather than to the Rationalists? One excuse for this conduct is that "we are so accustomed to hear every humane or unselfish deed, and every moral act, described as Christian that 'good' and 'Christian' have almost become synonymous terms" (p. 196 of "The Churches and Modern Thought", Thinker's Library Edition). So also with the other great religions. They take the credit of all that is ethical in their teaching although it pre-existed and was taken over by them.

The picture of religion's failure to benefit mankind is somewhat blurred in our time, through Rationalism having already forced the ministers of supernatural religions to turn their attention to *conduct rather than to belief* and to the under-dog and social service than to the salvation of souls. Thus the anomaly occurs of religion getting the credit for what has been brought about by its opponent. However, whether getting the credit or not, may the latter be equally successful in bringing about a

reform urgently required at this moment. I refer to the crying need for systematic moral instruction devoid of all religious dogmas in every school throughout the world. It is required more than ever now that the beliefs to which the ethical teaching has been appended are being thrown overboard. If children are taught that the reason for decent conduct is chiefly to please a god or spite a devil, what is likely to happen when they grow up and find the existence of these bogies being called in question and often ridiculed? In a country like India with its several creeds the ethical teaching becomes such a problem that it cannot but be greatly if not entirely neglected in any government school where this reform is not as yet in operation. We have here a striking instance of what the reviewer of my book in "The Servant of India" (Sept. 29) boldly and, I consider, rightly terms "The curse of religion". The upward progress of man is being impeded by religion in an exceedingly important matter: the improvement of this ethical outlook and hence of his conduct.

If all who know perfectly well or have a very good idea that the beliefs embedded in these religions are nothing but a collection of superstitions that are demonstrably false knew equally well how harmful they were; if they knew how much they have added to the burden of "the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to"; if they knew these things and that concealment and white lies were only doing mischief, I feel sure that a very appreciable proportion of them would no longer stand aloof. Even those unfavourably placed for openly identifying themselves with militant Rationalism could and would find a way of helping it.

For example the financial help it so sorely needs could be given incognito.

Lack of funds for prosecuting our campaign hinders the march of Rationalism more than anything else. The amount of advertisement that can be afforded for enlightening publications such as those of the *Rationalist Press Association* and the *Pioneer Press* is deplorably inadequate with the result that their most informative books and journals instead of reaching a large number of the ill-informed and unconverted where most required, circulate chiefly among small groups of the well-informed and converted where least required. Consider how this bears upon the progress of our Cause. Need we be surprised at the unsatisfactory headway? It is publicity, ever more and more of it, which will

hasten the advent of Rationalism's reign. It is the master-key which will open every gate at present barring its advance. I should be glad to expatiate on the wonders publicity would work and on our chances of obtaining it, but I expect I have already fully occupied the space allowed for my lucubrations. Perhaps the kind editor may give me an opportunity in another issue of "Reason". Meanwhile, though this journal cannot have the publicity it will be able to have one day when its coffer has been replenished, I hope my little effort to be fair by and rouse the silent sceptic may meet the eye of many who will be induced to commence aiding this much to be desired and all important replenishment.

VIVIAN PHELIPS.

[The writer of this article is the learned author of that well-known rationalist classic—*The Churches and Modern Thought*—We shall be very pleased to publish another article on this subject from his facile pen. ED. REASON.]

RATIONAL DRESS.

Far far back, when man first began groping in the darkness of his brain seeking to raise himself above the lower animals, he took unto himself a peculiar burden—not Eve (about which he had no choice), but what was equivalent in those abysmal days—convention.

To-day convention has permeated every part of our life. We are born-live-and-die as much as possible in a conventional manner. To go further into the interesting growth of this parasite is not possible here. We shall dwell on one of its smaller and less important aspects. Clothing, we presume, originated primarily for the purpose of protection against

the elements. The wild man, for whom at the most, a skin sufficed, gave place in time to the less fiercer nomad and later still to the peace-loving tiller of the soil. The vitality and resistance of man was lessened due to these easier modes of living and so the need for clothes increased. Acquirement of land and property brought vanity in its train and possessing more than the necessities of life led to competition and pride in one's personal belongings. Here we find clothes playing an important part for they provided along with jewels an excellent means whereby a man could display his wealth to his neighbours.

Wearing apparel plays many different roles but those give no explanation for the tremendous conventionality that is as a rule associated with it.

Each period shows its own particular mode of dress but how stern at all periods has been the disapproval and censure shown to any departure from the conventional garb of the day.

Men, who look upon themselves as by far the more rational of the two sexes, are strangely enough more convention-ridden in this respect than women, who have gained for themselves a certain amount of liberty in dress through following the lead given them by women who, for reasons of their own, decide to look as daring as possible.

The men who live at the hub of to-day's civilization are clothed in almost one pattern and it is a strange fact that in spite of rapid changes and progress in all other directions there has been little or no substantial change in their form of dress for at least fifty years.

In a country like ours, European dress—especially for men, is admittedly neither suitable nor comfortable, to say nothing of being unhygienic. There is a distinct move, both here and in other tropical countries, to discard the conventional for the sensible and more suitable forms of dress. Cool white clothes for evening wear in place of the thick black suit which can never be washed.

Where the evenings are sultry why add to existing hardships by wearing unsuitable clothes? In office, right through the heat of the day, no open collars and

no shortsleeves mean no comfort. Does it look well to be unsuitably dressed at any time? And yet for a man to attend a crowded evening function in the hot season in any but the formal dress would be an unheard-of-thing. Impossible to break the rule! Far better to suffer all the torture, to sit through a long dinner in an uncomfortable stiff shirt-front, to dance through a warm night with stiff collars gradually turning soft with moisture and perhaps end the evening by catching a bad cold going home! All this, rather than appear unconventional in cool and more suitable attire. But, of course, that would mean looking different to the others; different—that is what is most feared. To be looked on as different is a most horrible crime in a nobody but an admirable thing in a "Bernard Shaw"!

We are endeavouring to throw off other burdens. Why not be reasonable where our dress is concerned and give our minds freedom from this daily worry?

We who take pride in our culture—our Art—who call ourselves Indians with pride—we find that our clothes are not good enough for us. We who live in a land of sunshine, must dress exactly the same as they do in London and Paris. Why do we do it? Is it a lack of self-confidence? Do we believe in some way that the wearing of these unsuitable clothes helps in some mysterious way? Whatever it may be, it is time we came to our senses and started behaving rationally in this respect—and in times perhaps in every other respect as well.

PIROJA WADIA.

THE FREETHINKER AND THE CHURCH TIMES.

The life of a Freethought propagandist ought never to be a dull one. That is if he is blessed with a sense of humour and a lively estimation of the power of human stupidity. The first enables him to laugh where otherwise he might be moved to tears or give up the game in despair, the latter teaches him not to expect too much in the course of a few years, and so to be satisfied with the impression that he does make. Some of my intimate friends know that I am rather partial to the cinema. They might not wonder at that, if the pictures I went to see and enjoyed were all good from either a dramatic or a spectacular point of view. But the truth is that I can enjoy very bad pictures quite as much as very good ones. I can get as much enjoyment out of a cowboy firing thirty or forty shots out of a six chambered revolver, and never reloading, or joining in a bar-room tangle with six other men, then jumping through a window on to the back of a horse, thence into a river and being carried over a terrific fall, coming to the bank in time to have a fight with another bundle of desperados to rescue a girl, and *never losing his hat*, as I can from the finest performance in existence. For enjoyment at either end of the scale all I ask is that the thing shall be good of its kind. If it is bad, then I like it to be genuinely bad, not streaked with good. And if it is good then I want it to be good. I have no objection to a fool, although I do not like him to pose as a philosopher. And I like a philosopher, if he plays the fool, to play it with that intellectual distinction which an actor like Sir Henry Irving always gave to a part, no matter how badly he conceived the

character or how completely he was unfitted to depict it.

* * *

The "Freethinker" and the Press.

I will return to the moral of this later; but it was brought to my mind by some comments which appeared in the *Church Times* for February 3, in the course of a review of a written discussion between Mr. C. E. Joad and Mr. Arnold Lunn on "Is Christianity True?" It says that Mr. Lunn is as confused as his opponent and the debate supplies about 400 pages of redundancy and repetition. And in order to drive home their point about Mr. Joad *we* are brought in, thus:—

The *Freethinker*, a periodical of almost pathetic sincerity, which regularly quotes the *Church Times*, sometimes with apologetic commendation, recently complained that the *Church Times* never quotes it. That is because we never read it. The reason is that its contentions were proved ridiculous years ago to all but those queer persons who find pleasure and solace in the repetition of irrational negations. Why waste time in pulverizing the remains of a ruined jerry-built Victorian structure? And Mr. Joad is as *démodé* as the *Freethinker*. He yearns to fight over again battles that were fought a generation ago.

As I have not yet read the discussion I must leave Mr. Joad to look after himself. I am only concerned with the comments on the *Freethinker*, and I am as anxious to express my indebtedness to the *Church Times* for a few amused minutes as I am to the most absurd performance I have seen on the stage or on the films.

First a question of fact and explanation. I do not know I have ever complained that the *Church Times* does not quote us. I really do not care a brass button whether it does or not. I suspect that if it quoted us too frequently we should be growing either too respectable to be useful, or so silly as to be mistaken for an advocate of some form of religious belief. I have never *complained* of the treatment of the *Freethinker* by the generally, I have only *explained* the press as an example of the intellectual cowardice of genuine Christianity where its real enemies are concerned. The general rule is that wherever possible the *Freethinker* must not be mentioned by name, for fear that Christians who do not know of its existence may be led to read it. If it *must* be referred to, then it must be by some circumlocutory way such as "an Atheistic journal" or a "Free-thinking paper," etc. On the other hand it is "borrowed," from for material for paragraphs and articles without the least acknowledgment. And for the information of the *Church Times* I may whisper that some of the writers who do thus borrow from the *Freethinker* without the acknowledgment are actually themselves occasional contributors to its columns. But their living depends upon their acting up to the rules laid down by their employers. I shall be somewhat surprised to learn that the *Church Times* does not know that this boycott exists, although as it imagines that its own thought is really "advanced" it is quite possible that it is the case. Perhaps what I call boycott the *Church Times* would call a Christian precaution against poisoning the mind of the rising generation.

I cannot say I do not read the *Church Times*. I do, and also other religious

papers, and hope that if Roman Catholic theology is correct, when I die it will be remembered that I have had a dose of intellectual purgatory already. But I like to know just what my opponents believe and say, and as a deal of the *Freethinker* is naturally made up of paragraphs and articles dealing with current statements by representatives of the different religious sects, it would seem that we are really and inevitably more up to date than is the *Church Times* which knows that a paper is out of date without ever reading it. There was a time, of course, when Christians met the *Freethinker* with the cry that it was vulgar, ignorant, blasphemous, obscene, and ought to be suppressed. When these examples of Christian truthfulness began to lose strength it was discovered that what it attacked was not Christianity as now understood. It was Victorian theology, and Christians have now outgrown it. May I suggest to the *Church Times* that if it publishes in its columns the kind of thing that was once taught as Christianity, and which some Christians are still backward enough to believe, they should not fail to subscribe to the *Freethinker*. They, and we, would then be working for the destruction of error. The *Church Times* does not wish people to believe in this Victorian theology; neither do we. Why not let us become fellow workers in the cause of truth? We promise, in order to still further promote the cause of true Christianity, to send the paper for one year at half rates to all new subscribers who write in the name of the *Church Times*. I expect this offer will be accepted by the *Church Times*, for one cannot conceive a genuinely Christian paper saying something it does not mean.

* * *

What we have done.

But I really do want to help the *Church Times*. I wish to educate it, and I desire its aid in rooting out those survivals of Victorian Christianity that are still with us. The *Freethinker* is now about fifty-two years old. When it started, it set out to destroy :—

- (1) The belief in the inspiration of the Bible.
- (2) The belief in miracles.
- (3) The belief in God and a soul.
- (4) The belief in the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

And to secure :—

- (5) The complete secularization of the State, and the absolute equality of all opinions before the law.

There are quite a number of other things for which the *Freethinker* has always stood and for which it has fought—such as the rational treatment of the criminal, the equality of the sexes, the substitution of arbitration for war, etc., etc. But I am now concerned only with the attack of the *Freethinker* on main religious and Christian beliefs.

Now it cannot be said that the work of the *Freethinker*, so far as the secularization of the State is concerned is either complete or old-fashioned. Religion is still established in this country, its representatives occupy privileged positions, the Churches and chapels get considerable financial support from the State, and Governments, particularly the present one, still cringe to the organized power of the Churches. These are obviously live issues. So we will turn to the other points.

I agree that so far as numbers go, thanks largely to the *Freethinker*, and its

persistence, a number of “advanced” persons do not believe in the inspiration of the Bible or in miracles. But there are vast numbers of Christians—clergymen and laymen—who still do. If the *Church Times* does not believe this I would advise it to read the other religious papers. But perhaps it treats these as it does the *Freethinker* and knows them by inspiration only. Then there is the belief in God and in a soul. I do not think the *Church Times* really regards these as Victorian superstitions. Perhaps it may have been misled by reading the discussion by Messrs. Joad and Lunn, and in thinking that Mr. Joad represents the Freethought case. The *Freethinker* has done a deal to destroy the belief in God and a soul in the minds of many, and to weaken it in the minds of a larger number, but that question is hardly out of date—so far as Christians are concerned.

So we come to number 4, and in so advanced a paper as the *Church Times* it is surprising to find a little further on in the review with which I am dealing the following :—

Was our Lord God incarnate? Was he born of the Virgin Mary? Did he rise again from the Dead? These are the questions, and on the answers depend whether Christianity is regarded as true or false.

Now these are surely all pre-Victorian beliefs, and they really involve the others. The birth of a child without a father, and the resurrection of a crucified man from the dead are surely miracles. And if we believe them we can only believe because the Bible tells us they are true. And in that case, here we are, by implication, if not in so many set phrases, back with the most ignorant and the most crude form

of Victorian and even pre-Victorian theology. I agree with the *Church Times* that these are the cardinal things in Christianity. If they are true then Christianity is true, if they are not true then nothing else matters. But please don't pretend that in these beliefs, however expressed, there do not lie the crudest, the most ignorant, and the most primitive forms of religious belief.

And now I must come to the moral that was foreshadowed in my opening paragraph. If the *Church Times* filled its columns with genuinely intellectual stuff, I could read it with great pleasure. If it were filled with unadulterated stupidity, something like the *War Cry* or the *Christian Herald*, I could read it with unalloyed pleasure. But when a paper such as the *Church Times* has all the stupid beliefs of the *Christian Herald* and the *War Cry*, all the savage superstitions of a Billy Sunday or a Welsh Calvinistic chapel, expressed as though it were proclaiming a genuinely scientific philosophy, then my enjoyment is spoiled.

It is like serving up the sweet with the fish, and the soup with the dessert at one's dinner. The clown is all right in his place, but his place is not at a meeting of the British Association. The savage is interesting in his proper environment; but parading in the columns of a modern paper, and attempting to disguise his uncivilized beliefs in the language of civilization he arouses resentment.

So I feel sure that the work of the *Freethinker* remains to be completed. I cannot unreservedly accept the compliment of the *Church Times* that the work of the *Freethinker* has been so successful as to have completed its self-appointed task. But I am not disheartened that we have not done more. It is here that a perception of the power of stupidity comes in. It keeps us from expecting too much, and to have hope for the future. After all, even the *Church Times* is not so primitive in its thought as it used to be.

CHAPMAN COHEN
in *The Freethinker*.

SINS ARE DIFFERENT NOW!

Additions by an Atheist to the reply by a Chaplain.*

It would be two thousand pities if Rev. M. V. McCaul were allowed to attempt to hoodwink "the Tottering Christian Believer" who is fortunately becoming a rarer animal day by day, (vide daily moans in the Press about empty churches) by his reply to Prof. Low.

It is equally true that only on all but the very thoughtless or the stagnantly thoughtful can the Rev. Gent's dishonesty or may be just honest stupidity have any effect, but it is strictly necessary

to challenge all such wild statements made by Chaplains and others.

If the majority of readers are thoughtless about spiritual things as Mr. McCaul himself admits, what a waste of money and how futile it has been paying fat salaries to an army of *padres* who are alleged to have had the "the call" from God to teach all and sundry spirituality and yet left the majority thoughtless! Surely that is a very damning admission for any professional *padre* to make in print?

"Who says that a figure in red with a horn on his head has any place in the function of religion?" Isn't that an immense piece of bluff, Mr. McCaul? (The fundamental basis of all religion is FEAR and the "figure in red" supplies that element in Christianity surely?)

Do you really mean to tell your readers that you do not think the dear old fellow has any place in the Christian religion? Or do you mean that Mr. Devil does not come into "the selling talk" of the brand of Christianity you represent? To me 99% of the endos of Christ is diminished by the summary dismissal of that great sport, the Devil? The goodness without any evil becomes meaningless.

Now, where is the sense of referring Prof. Low or any other thinking person to the 15th or any other chapter or verse of any one saint in particular or all the whole casoodle of them in general, when the Bible or even Christ himself cannot stand the meagrest of critical scrutiny? That sort of "evidence" is played out in 1933, thanks to the onslaughts of Atheism on the pillar of Orthodoxy. What was overwhelming "evidence" fifty years ago to burn or torture to death a brave human being isn't now enough to hang a cat!

If we are to take the arguments on "gluttony and sin" strutted out by Mr. McCaul as an indication of the mental development of the spiritual Christian, its a pity that that stout fellow

Nero had not more lions to finish the job properly!

As an Atheist and so as a "nonparty" observer, I consider the type of arguments of the calibre under review, do more to ridicule Christianity than silence would.

As in the sausage trade one has to learn scientific (not spiritual) salesmanship, so in this trade only trained religious salesmen should risk the chilling effect of print!

Finally to illustrate ever so simply that even the thoughtless majority may understand the utter uselessness of priests of ALL kinds, it is interesting to note that even King George V, who has special priests (& well paid ones at that!) to pray for his good health, Reuter reports, owing to an influenza epidemic will not return to London till it subsides!

Here is a case of a King's common-sense overcoming his faith in his witch doctors, and don't forget we are told the King do *no* wrong! Verb. sap!

I shall be very pleased if Mr. McCaul replies or if he finds himself unequal to the task get the army out to help him, as quite interesting points can be brought out about Christianity not being a power for good, though it is incessantly trotted out as such. That does not mean their religions can crow over it; it is a case of "those who live in glass houses should not throw stones!"

D. R. D. WADIA.

[Mr. M. V. McCaul is really amusing when he wants us to believe that the Devil is now a negligible quantity in the Christian religion. Our contributor, of course, is quite right when he says that to do away with the devil means the end of Christianity. As a matter of fact, there is a Roman Catholic Missionary here who does not think like Mr. McCaul. His business is to frighten his followers with realistic pictures of the Devil and he does lay it thick,

ED. REASON.]

BY THE WAYSIDE.

SOCIAL REFORM.

One cannot be proud of our Assembly for sending the Hindu Divorce Law Bill to the Select Committee by a bare majority of one vote. What is more, some of the views expressed by the distinguished members are not in keeping with the standard of education and civilisation that they lay claim to. It is permissible for men to enter into fresh sacraments when the wife is alive but for the wife, such is not the custom! The Hon. Mr. Jha is not very clear as to whether such an action is permitted them or not. Sir Hari Singh's Bill seeks to legalise only such a permission Bhai Permanand mentioned that he did not know of any Hindu wife who has left her husband because he is impotent. Even if that is correct, the new law does not force any wife to do that hereafter, but it only keeps the door open for such as desire to escape. The Divorce Law, as it stands, is certainly unsatisfactory. Impotence, imbecility and sanious leprosy may not occur once in 5,000 marriages. But incompatibility of temperament is met with at least in one out of every 100 marriages, if not more. This, far more than those cause mentioned above, is an important cause of marital unhappiness and makes conjugal life highly distasteful. Still there is no escape out of it. Should some level-headed person bring in a Bill, a cry of horror will be raised against this destroyer of homes and society through its own choice will suffer in silence.

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Mualana Wajuddin's amendment met the fate it richly deserved. According to him, because the Muslim religion permits

marriage at all ages, any restriction is opposed to Islam. Strange conclusion indeed! There are many things that are permitted by religion either expressly or by failing to impose any ban upon them. In such cases the only test that can be applied is whether a particular custom is for the greater good of society. The Government of India did apply such a test and in the words of Sir Harry Haig considered the Sarda Act to be "a step in the direction of dealing with what was felt to be a serious social evil." All reformers must be happy at their decision. Should the Muslim religion have made child marriage compulsory, then the Act would have been opposed to Islam and the Faithful might have cause to grouse; but under the present conditions they have no reason whatsoever.

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I strongly hold that for the unification of India we should have only one language, one style of dress and one kitchen meaning thereby that anybody should have the liberty of eating at any table so long as the place and the food is to his taste. To these conditions I would also add inter-communal marriages. I rejoice at the crushing defeat that Raja Bahadur Krishnamachariar sustained at the Assembly. He spoke of the strong feeling against intercommunal marriages. I do not know where he has found it. Whenever there has been such a marriage, there has always been a chorus of approval. The regret is that such marriages do not turn out to be successful in the majority of cases. But this is entirely due to the customs and traditions that are bred in our bones. The old fossils

guard these traditions very zealously. However, it is certainly cheerful to note that an Assembly that passed the Divorce Reform by a bare majority of one vote killed the amendment of the Hon. Raja Bahadur by 30 votes to 12. One almost wrote that perhaps the vote in the previous bill was so narrow because it gave rights to women. In passing, I, and I hope you also readers of "Reason", will not forget Mr. Batliwala of Dadar Colony who suggested that the enlightened Parsee Youths would be valuable companions to my backward sisters who are trying to tear holes in the purdah.

What evidence?

During the course of last two weeks, strange phenomena have occurred in the suburbs of Bombay. At Malad a speaking calf was born. At Andheri clothes got off the drying line, danced a zig and walked into the washing tub. Almost *a la* Micky Mouse. At Ahmedabad the astral body of Vallabhabhai Patel has been in communication with some one. Two years back, at Goa, a daughter-in-law who was ill-treating her mother-in-law was, at a special request to St. Francis Xavier, converted into a sow. At the moment of the metamorphosis, the daughter-in-law was in a delicate state of health; one has not heard what the offspring were like. Though at the start it was announced that anyone could see the solicitude of God, later on, it was given out that the Pope had forbidden the display of God's Justice. At the time many a pious Catholic believed in this, but today the majority of them feel

that they have been fooled. So also for the other reports of the speaking calf and the dancing clothes. These reports are widely read. The danger is not so much for the present as for the future. Some years back I was invited by a student friend of mine to listen to a Catholic priest who was to address a meeting that evening. I went there and watched him proving that Jesus Christ was Divine. His arguments were drawn from the Bible and to his Catholic audience that was sufficient guarantee. One of the arguments was that whereas the other prophets spoke of their Lord, Christ spoke of himself as the Lord—that is why he was divine. The only evidence for this was of course the Gospels. Similarly, in the future, a student pouring over the ancient copies of the local newspapers would come across the above-mentioned incidents and pad his thesis about human belief in the mysterious. I grant that other evidence dealing with the source would be laid out, but do not these enthusiasts build a pyramid out of a single stone? Therefore it is very necessary that all these strange phenomena should be properly investigated before they are dished to the public. If 100 people had seen the first announcement, 50 of them may not have seen the rest and at least 10 out of these fifty would attach some value to it. They will tell their credulous children. This may be the mustard seed from which will spring forth the mighty tree of the mysterious if it is watered with the desire to believe.

ALI AKBAR.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

ERRONEOUS IDEAS RESPONSIBLE FOR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

Nothing is more fallacious than the saying: "Man is a religious animal." This is no more true than that "Man is a thinking creature", leave alone a rational being though he takes great pride that he is both. The latter saying may, to some extent, be accepted as it

is true that some men think and the rest only follow. But to assert that man is a religious creature is to wrongly ascribe to him a natural characteristic he does not possess. It is true that some sort of religious belief is professed by most people all over the world, but it can be

easily shown that were it not for the early religious instruction that is forced on children before they can comprehend things clearly, most people would grow without religious ideas at all. What can be more discouraging for the progress of enlightenment than to see young Mahomedans hardly seven or eight years old under the spiritual direction of an ignorant Moulvi who strives to make them learn the Koran by heart in a language with which they are unfamiliar? Young Hindus and Parsees also learn all the superstitions of their creeds before they are ten years old, and when older the *gurus* and Mobeds see to it that they are firmly grounded in the all the mysticism of their faith. The same is true of other communities in India; young Christian girls and boys are handed over to superstitious and mostly ignorant nuns who sow the seed of superstition into their plastic mind, and as soon as they are older zealous priests and missionaries take them in hand and aim at making them religious believers rather than giving them a liberal education. The same is true of people in other countries though some like France, Turkey, Russia and Spain have recently discovered that young children must not be compelled to receive religious instruction and the State rightly makes it a point to discourage such a practice. On the whole, it must be said that in most countries religion is forced on the young and yet it is seriously claimed that man is a religious animal !

It is always a fascinating subject to think how man came by his religious beliefs. We, Rationalists, I think, rightly believe that in its primitive form religion began with fear or awe of the unknown and that the priesthood began in magical endeavours to counteract that

fear. It is easy to imagine how the ignorance of cause and effect and the attribution of all observed phenomena to the agency of imaginary beings gave rise to numerous religious beliefs. All the learned men who have devoted their time to the study of this subject tell us that the origin of religion can be easily traced to this cause. It matters not whether these beliefs began as pure fetichism and ended in a lofty monotheism; the same chain of reasoning can be traced to account for the belief in supernaturalism and the dualism of existence. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful if men would have come to any such beliefs if from the beginning people were gifted by nature with a correct understanding of all that is. Unfortunately man had no such knowledge. He has gained whatever knowledge or wisdom he has now by sheer experience, often painful and laborious, and he has learnt the cause and effect of phenomena by careful observation. When no such knowledge and experience existed what was more natural than to ascribe the cause of any phenomenon to any fanciful guess. This was indeed the condition of our ancestors. The savage who believes that a spirit animates every object he sees around him is in reality no more stupid than he who believes that a god or goddess is responsible for every phenomenon in nature. We, ourselves, till quite recently seriously believed that disease was a divine visitation, generally as a punishment. We can afford to be wise now that we know that they are caused by germs or by lapses from the preventable laws of hygiene and sanitation. The Greek or Roman, who believed that Neptune was the God of the Sea, was in this respect not wiser

than the Hindu who believes that Agni is the God of fire or Varuna that of water. It is the same belief under different names and the same reasoning gave rise to both. Not even the monotheist, who prides himself in having a superior belief to these polytheists, can say that he is wiser than them, for, after all, he has placed the government of things in one being instead of several, and for aught he knows he may be as mistaken as they are. As it is he needs attribute all evil things to another being as powerful and omniscient as the god who is responsible for all good things.

Would Moses have been so confident that a powerful god spoke to him and directed him what to do in a grave crisis, and would his people have believed so implicitly if they knew that our planet was not so important a world in the universe as they really believed? If Moses knew that our earth was only a tiny atom in a limitless universe and that it had existed for millions of years, and that man was not the lord of creation, but was ascended from lowly animal ancestors, would he have been so sure that a god cared so very much for him and his people as to take the trouble to come to this insignificant world to rescue them? It is doubtful. Would Christianity and Islamism which have been founded on these erroneous ideas have come into existence? It is again doubtful. These ideas would germinate in the minds of people who had different ideas altogether of our place in nature and our importance in it from what modern science teaches. These erroneous ideas were firmly believed to be true till about three hundred years ago, and after this one wonders that systems of religion built on them should yet have such a hold on millions of people. How many are there who know and keenly

appreciate the meaning of the facts as revealed by modern astronomy and geology? The former has revealed to us the utter insignificance, not only of our tiny planet, but of the solar system itself in the universe. The ancients and our forefathers had not, and most people living have not, the slightest idea of the immensity of the universe and the millions of worlds in it. There are millions of stars in space, all not of the same age and physical characters, and thousands of them are stars of first, second and third magnitudes. Our sun, which is also one of these stars, is only of the sixth magnitude.

Does the average person realise what the universe is? Trillions of miles separate these stars from one another. These distances are so appalling that the mind cannot grasp them. Suffice it to say that light which travels at the rate of 180,000 miles per second takes 10 to 10,000 years to reach us from these various stars. Is it not reasonable to think that if the sun, which is a small star, is attended by a family of planets these other suns might also have their planets some of which may be inhabited like our earth? The compilers of the Bible, the Koran and other sacred books had no such knowledge, otherwise they might have been more cautious in describing the relation of the supposed creator of all these worlds with our tiny earth and its insignificant inhabitants. On reading the Bible carefully one cannot but be struck that its compilers believe this earth to be the only world that mattered; in fact the centre of the universe and the theatre of its supposed creator's activities. They believed that the sun, moon and stars were created for the benefit of the earth and the blue sky above was the abode of that creator and other spirits. Even, now, the average religionist believes that the blue vault

above is the heaven to which his soul will go when he dies. A pious Mahomedan when he speaks of Allah will raise his eyes aloft and give you to understand that Allah lives there. Have they any idea that the blue vault above is the limitless space and that it is all round us ?

It is on such considerations that the educated and thoughtful have ceased to believe in any religion founded on such erroneous ideas. Astronomy and geology, to mention only two of the sciences, have shattered all these wrong ideas and consequently the religions founded on them must be necessarily false. It is true that there are many educated and apparently thoughtful persons who do not take such a view, but who, on the contrary, contend that all is well with religion and that modern science has actually strengthened it rather than weakened it. It is difficult to agree with such people and much less to understand their mentality. It is possible that their attitude may be explained in several ways and many writers have attempted to explain it. There is no doubt that many pretty well-informed persons are totally indifferent about religious beliefs. These are the people who conform to the general customs caring little whether such customs hinder intellectual progress and perpetuate superstitions and narrowmindedness. Many well-instructed persons have not included geology and astronomy in their studies and are therefore unable to draw the conclusion that these sciences reveal regarding the universe, and to appreciate that these revelations are at variance with religious beliefs. Many who know these sciences are ignorant of biology and so cannot shake off the dualistic notion regarding body and soul which encourages a belief in spiritual things as distinct

from materialism. Among the educated we also find a large number who find it profitable to pander to the popular religious beliefs. This class embraces those professional men, politicians, journalists, society-people, businessmen and others who are afraid that their trade and social position might suffer if they did not outwardly conform to popular beliefs. A common fallacy among the thoughtless is to naively ask why learned priests & other religious people do not recognise the errors we see so clearly. They forget that a priest has committed himself to a belief from an early age and that his business in life is to defend that creed. It is also assumed that he knows all the objections of the other side. Generally he does not and his seminary studies were not directed that way. He may have a second hand, garbled notion of the opponent's views, but such a person cannot be expected to have a reasonable, independent and unprejudiced view of the question. One may as well expect a Moulvi to tell us that Islamism is not a true religion or a Rabbi to say that Christianity is the true one.

A very large number, especially in India, who pass for highly educated persons are not so at all. They have certainly received a professional education which often enables them to be successful in their career. But it is the ambition of very few of these people to cultivate mental culture for the sake of culture alone. Outside their profession or perhaps a little of sport they are quite indifferent as to what is going on and have no interest in anything except money-making. They are content to follow the herd as they are incapable of doing anything else and doubtless the masses look up to them with great admiration as "educated" people who support their beliefs.

C. L. D'Avoine.

KRISHNAMURTHI'S OUTLOOK ON LIFE.

An Appreciation of his Present Philosophy.

During the last five years Krishnamurthi appears to have changed much in his writings which seem to be quite different from his previous books, though an attempt has been made to show some consistency by using certain simple colourless words which can have more than one meaning and hence different hearers and readers may put that construction on an idea which appears to him or her most adaptable to their pet beliefs. Krishnamurthi is therefore accused of ambiguity and vagueness,—a charge of which he is conscious and to which he pleads guilty. Even so his outlook on life has changed remarkably to suit the current scientific thought though he does not come to the logical final conclusion and fails to satisfy the orthodox mind as well as the new scientific mind. He is trying to do what no one has yet been able to achieve *viz.* to harmonise scientific thought with mystifying occultism, even though science is admittedly progressing day to day and therefore incomplete while occultism or the unverifiable and, therefore, hidden mysteries are yet awaiting the investigation of psychic scientists as well as psychological scholars of the different schools but especially those of dynamic psychology.

Krishnamurthi uses the word "Life" and avoids the use of the word "Soul" and considers belief in life after death or reincarnation to be immaterial on the part of an individual. He confuses the average mind by sometimes saying that it is Life that matters and people may call it Life or God or Truth or what they will. Life is the eternal reality which must be lived in activity with an Intelli-

gent, Complete Freedom and Harmony through Understanding and co-ordination of Thought-Feeling. In this one sentence, he seems to sum up his entire philosophy of life and avoids reference to the pet beliefs of the past centuries in the metaphysical ideas of God, Soul and Re-incarnation. Understanding, Thought-Feeling, Intelligence are concepts which relate to the mental activities of man who seeks complete freedom and in progressive civilization complete harmony with the objective world outside himself but especially with other human beings. Like many old school writers he uses the word spiritually as synonymous with mentally and creates a confusion between the meanings of the words personality, soul or individual spirit on the one hand and the individual mind on the other. Even Intuition is given a mystifying significance because of its growing capacity of spontaneous judgment based upon the biologically inherited instinctive brain capacity and the habits formed by the repetition of conditioned reflexes through previous education and experience of an individual's life.

Instead of wisdom, ancient or modern, Krishnamurthi lays emphasis on understanding and therefore calls upon man indirectly to know all that can be known through active life more than by reading books. Man has his native intelligence in varying capacity but capable of being informed and educated to form social habits. Thought or Reasoning, and Feeling or Emotion have to be co-ordinated in active life by a scientific adaptation to environments and thus an individual is asked to live in complete

Freedom Now and Here. He does not use the word salvation, Moksha or Neervana promised by the old orthodoxy as distant possible goals after several incarnations but recommends an active and full Life in Freedom which can be acquired, according to him, now or at each passing moment and Here or at every place while living on the earth.

Though he lays emphasis on the realities of life, he seems to forget the realities of the social character of each individual's life who lives in the midst of Society. He lays emphasis on mental freedom which can only be achieved by persons whose bread problem has been definitely solved and made certain of attainment from day to day, but he fails to consider the importance of the social solution of the same bread-problem for each and every individual of the largest number of mankind called the masses in each country. While he emphasises life, it matters little to him whether people call it God or Truth though he says it is immaterial whether one believes in God or not and though he does know that Truth is variable with understanding growing through knowledge in an individual.

Though he does not wish to belong to any school of philosophy or of any "ism," he makes his above recommendation to everybody to live an active life in the manner aforesaid. He thus seems to exhibit his outlook to be that of a philosophical anarchist who desires complete freedom for everybody without any sanctions to enforce rules of social convention or of lawful authority in the form of social boycott or legal imprisonment but which should be automatically observed by understanding men in mutual co-operation.

In the intellectual field he discards all authority and asks his audience not to make an authority of him. He neither affirms nor denies, therefore that he is a world teacher. There have been great teachers in the past but no one can be said to be a world teacher as the only person from whom authority emanates, but if in modern times the man has facilities to travel about different parts of the world and he preaches to the adults everywhere any doctrines in relation to Life, he is in fact one of the world teachers who can so travel about the world. No one can be said to be a world teacher that cannot satisfy the minds of all, however popular he may be for a certain time. Krishnamurthi does the work of a teacher and his personal bread-problem is solved by the credit and reputation which has been built up for him by Dr. Besant in the beginning and his own writings later on. He therefore enjoys that intellectual and mental freedom which everyone, as he says, can Now and Here. He forgets the conventional and legal limits of even his own freedom and though he condemns exploitation of man by man and the capitalist system of social organisation, he offers nothing as a substitute and in his eagerness to fly away from every "ism," he fails to see that freedom for each and all can only be realised through a socialistic order on to a communistic system of Society as putting an end to all class difference and leading on to the philosophical anarchy when each man will grow into less and less of individual differentiation to do his work in a free and willing attitude to all the rules of a truly Co-operative Society. When he therefore says that it is possible for each and all to live in freedom Now and Here, he stresses the problem from the standpoint

of each individual of the parasitic leisured class who live upon the labour of other persons and not from that of everybody. A few leisured individuals have attained in the past such a mental attitude towards Life and can do so even now but humanity will have to pass through very rapid revolutions before the stage of philosophical anarchy can be reached after an unknown and unpredictable number of years. In the meanwhile, Krishnamurthis will come and teach to leisured or semi-leisured decadent self-centred egoists but it is the active Life alone which will make the necessary changes and not merely the mystifying presentation of ideas and manipulation of words having different meanings in

different concepts. Evolutionary and revolutionary changes will follow the dialectic movement of productive forces and productive relations between man and man to bring into existence a Socialist Society and to put an end to the exploitation of man by man by the socialisation of land and other means of production, thereby making leisure and culture available to all. This will happen in the near future though no definite date can be predicted for even this change while the further changes will take a longer transition in building up new environments and a new mental attitude towards Life in general.

MANEKJI L. VAKIL.

THE GIFT OF FREETHOUGHT.

Freethought is a gift indeed, and it is a gift peculiar to man. There are not a few amongst all people who see danger in it and do their utmost to discourage it in all possible ways. There are many persons also who, while secretly cherishing and developing it, have not got the requisite intellectual grit and courage to declare it openly to those they happen to come in friendly contact with. There is yet a third class of people who, after having endeavoured to convince themselves of the benefits and possibilities of honest freethought, do not hesitate to speak out their minds on this subject or that to others as occasion arises and willingly take the risks (?) said to be involved in such a free exercise of the mind. These are the three broad categories into which the present-day humanity, may be

conveniently divided for purposes of discussion and argument about intellectual themes. Though Freethought has not yet come into its own, it has shown extraordinary fighting power and vitality against the tremendous array of inimical forces of superstition, tradition, bigotry, convention, fanaticism and against the general supine mental behaviour and tendencies of persons awfully obsessed with false ideas and falsified beliefs all the world over.

Personally I make a religion of Freethought, inasmuch as the very urge thereof is inborn with most of us and, if only not foolishly tampered with, clamours, though not as audibly as the roaring waves of the tempestuous sea, for full expression and complete satisfaction. Most of us have this urge in us, but what we generally do

with it is that we unconsciously suppress and repress it whenever it stirs in us and prepare the ground for reaping the painful harvest of it later in life.

If the intellect of man is not to exercise its inborn liberty in all conceivable directions, if it is not to operate unhampered in all legitimate fields with commendable vigour and sincerity, if, again, it is to be denied the luxury of this its spontaneous working, as has been the contention of orthodox and convention-bound men, I put the radical question, Why is there such a spontaneous urge at all in many of us? It could not have been our own modern creation. It could not have been any foreign stuff imposed on us by alien hands. It could not have been a thing entirely devoid of meaning in life. If I may so term it without offending thorough rationalists in any way, I have to say that this may be a sort of 'divine' equipment, an equipment that seems full of promise for the fruition or completion of cosmological processes, the word 'divine' having been carefully emptied of its usual theological or religious content.

The pity of it all, therefore, has been that most of us have conveniently drifted more unconsciously or subconsciously than deliberately, into ways and habits of thought, by virtue of various associations, environments and influences, in which there has been less opposition offered to the mind and more ease vouchsafed to it than would otherwise be the case. This constitutes a serious defect of the mind and a grave bar to its free march and progress on its appointed mission of investigation, exploration, research and decision. We have to make a serious defect of the mind and a grave bar to its free march and progress on its

appointed mission of investigation, exploration, research and decision. We have to make a series of vigorous attempts to bring us back to the original state where the mind had not yet been touched, contaminated and perverted by questionable influences and wrong impressions. The human brain is said to be the most powerful dynamo in the world, being as disastrous in its evil effects, if not properly protected and cared for, as it is potent and beneficial in its constructive and edifying aspects if only intelligently and consciously safeguarded and armed against its numerous foes, of which there is already a legion in the modern world.

If we only put forth sincere efforts and ponder well over things that ever keep flowing in to feed the intellect as psychologists say, and take sufficient care to sift and analyse them as exhaustively as possible, and build our conclusions on the results derived from such a merciless process of systematic reasoning, we have nothing to fear so far as intellectual sanity and clarity are concerned, and no considerable damage can possibly be inflicted on the thinking and reasoning organ. We then are in a position to keep clear of the path of peril. We then can understand in a way what 'Free-thought' is and what it means at present and what it may, in time to come, mean in terms of intellectual happiness, intellectual peace and solidarity; intellectual uprightness and honesty without seriously affecting the other aspects of our life and introducing a world of confusion into our inner realms of thought and feeling and thereby upsetting the equilibrium of life. Intellectual dishonesty, duplicity and the other time-serving gymnastic so often resorted to by orthodox, unscientific and uncritical people in times of defeat or

retreat at the hands of formidable rationalists suck the very life of the normally evolving intellect and dislocate the complex fabric of man, that epitome of all known and possibly unknown forces, that eternally embarrassing enigma that has been defying and baffling the best brains of mystics and scientists alike, of philosophers and religionists, of theologians and theosophists.

The main function of freethought, so far as I understand it, is to rid the growing mind of all possible checks, inhibitions, destructive impressions and the like and to keep it vigilantly from the corroding effects of any subsequent chain of these and other taboos and do's and don'ts.

Freethought is a great virtue; it is not merely 'free' thought as the phrase seems to suggest, but it is at the same time deep thought and wide thought; it is in short, thought that is at once burning, searching and ransacking, flinging its tenacious and probing tentacles far and wide and sparing none or nothing. It is man's liberating force; it is in fact the tremendous power that elevates him and fortifies him as nothing else in the world does. It is the little-known and less-appreciated key that miraculously unlock the doors of all the hidden chambers of the inner life of man. It is an inestimable boon, if rightly studied and interpreted.

R. NATESAIYER.

[Our contributor has raised some interesting points regarding the attitude Rationalists should take on all questions involving non-conformity, unbelief and conventions. Those who are interested on the subject should read Lord Morley's "On Compromise", Thinkers' Library, R. P. A. Lord Morley treats these questions exhaustively, and, as one would expect from the upright man that he was, he expresses himself fearlessly and without ambiguity]

Ed. Reason.

WHAT IS GOD.

If we were to ask this question to a clergy what would be his answer? He would reply "Oh God is Almighty, All Powerful, lover of everything that is good and punisher of all that is bad. He even knows your thoughts before you think and always punishes those who think bad of Him. He will bless those who worship Him and make them happy while those who don't, would go to hell." To cap all these the clergy will finish with something like, "To know God you must follow His teachings without any

doubts, any questions and any misgivings as to His identity." (as the worthy clergy has done). "You people are not yet worthy to know God—you are insignificant—how dare you ask about His identity? Even to ask where and what is God is a sin. He has created you all to worship him and only through His worship you can know Him."

Well let us analyse all what he has to say.

Supposing He created us all and so He wants us all to worship Him, praise Him

for all He has done in bringing us to this world of His. Now if we were to apply the same theory to a man who has done something for others and so wants them in return to praise him, to think of him that he is a man above them all and he is something to be worshipped and to be praised and so he wants them to worship him and if you were to ask the same clergy man what he thinks of this man he would without any hesitation say, "He is a conceited fool." And still he wants us to believe that God made men to worship Him. What an idea! What is sin for all others is a virtue in God—because God is great and all powerfull.

May I, in all humility, ask the clergy since He is all powerful and lover of all, that is good and punisher of all that is bad why is it that so many crimes, sins and bad things occur daily in this world? Can He not put a stop to all that is evil and instead do all that is good since He is all powerful and lover of right? He would say, "Oh, He just wants to test you. He makes you do bad things only to improve you. He makes you commit crimes only to punish you and so make you understand. He punishes for doing bad things." Well, who does not know that, "Prevention is better than cure", except this all-knowing God of his? What would you think of a father who purposely teaches his children to commit crimes so that he can punish them and so improve them? Does everyone not know that habits once formed are very difficult to leave? Still, this Father of the millions teach his children to commit crimes to improve them. His longstanding experience of some thousands of years does not seem to have taught him that this method is defective since it has not at all worked so far, and crimes are daily multiplying

instead of decreasing. Can He not put a stop to all this things? Why make a man do bad things and then try to improve him when He can instil from the start all that is good and make him do all that is right.

Let us also see if He punishes all that is bad. As long as a criminal evades detection he is called a respectable man. But the day he is caught he is stamped as a criminal. If a criminal is intelligent enough (and you would find them in any numbers) to evade detection he is respected everywhere. That means he is even more intelligent than God whom he cheats of his punishment. While the fellow who always prays to this God finds it difficult to get food for the next morning you will find numerous crimes undetected and the perpetrators of such crimes enjoying in this world. Then it means only this—that if you are intelligent enough to outwit the detective forces of your crimes then God does not punish for such crimes but the moment you are caught the punishment of this Almighty is inflicted. Does that mean All Powerful and Almighty? If you think that He is not all powerful as he is depicted then why waste time in praying for an identity which you have no reason to believe All Powerful. Is it not silly to commit a crime knowing that there is a chance of asking forgiveness to fall back upon? Does not that lead to more crimes since you think you are secure in the phantom shadow of forgiveness. Then why not put a stop to it?

Let us see what constitutes a sin. To my mind, sin is only committed when the perpetrator is either hurt morally, mentally or physically. The moment you think about committing a crime you

instinct tells you that you are doing a wrong thing. But believing in God kills that instinct for, you think that after the crime there is God to fall back upon for forgiveness. If there was no such thing as believing in God your instinct would stop you from doing that wrong. Every man has got instincts and if he were to follow these instincts faithfully and reasonably he has found God in the real sense of the word God. If you are reasonably convinced that doing a certain thing will not hurt you either mentally,

morally or physically you are not committing any sin and if you are not committing any sin there is no reason to ask forgiveness for what you have done unknowingly. Then this instinct which by way of reasoning tells you which is a sin and stops you from doing it is God in the real sense of the word and there is no supernatural power which guides you or punishes you as you might reason it out.

N. R. DANIAIWALA.

A PARSI ON OUR IRRATIONALISM.

We have received two lengthy and rambling letters from a Mr. Jal. S. Mirza, c/o J. Petit Institute, Bombay, in which he complains bitterly that Rationalists are irrational and that the Rationalist Association of India is wanting in its duty for encouraging vaccination which Mr. Mirza thinks is a most objectionable, dangerous and filthy method of preventing a disease which is itself caused by filth. Mr. Mirza's contention is that since the avowed object and aims of the Rationalist Association of India is to combat "all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of reason" it ought to combat the "error" of vaccination instead of encouraging it, and, incidentally, he thinks that since scientists, rationalists, atheists and others of that ilk cannot agree on such a simple subject as the connection of filth and disease, he is astonished that they claim to know anything about such "a vast subject as religion and belief in God." "Is it not absurd for them" he says "to dogmatise on such an all

important subject as immortality of the soul after death when they cannot be certain about such a trifling thing as vaccination?" After this one must admit that Mr. Mirza must be living with the full consciousness that he is a wonderfully clever man and perhaps he does not realize that he is a conceited one too. He says he is 53 years old and he claims to be a very wise man. If fortunately he is not suffering from any of these dreadful diseases caused by filth, he is undoubtedly suffering from mental dyspepsia which is a very unfortunate thing. Probably with the chronicity of this sad complaint at his age, it would be a waste of time to administer him a mental calomel in the shape of sound advice how to cultivate a scientific habit of mind. Such people as Mr. Mirza cannot be cured of such complaints. Facts and evidences, the two great specifics for such intellectual troubles, are worthless in their cases. Meanwhile, we note that Mr. Mirza's obsession for Rationalism is ludicrous

and must cause him unnecessary worry. "Le Pauvre Homme" as Moliere would have called him.

Now, it is quite true that the Rationalist Association of India has pledged itself to combat religious and social customs that cannot stand the test of reason. It cannot, by any stretch of imagination, include vaccination as one of these unreasonable customs. Vaccination originated in England at a time when small pox was playing havoc all over the world and very soon its protective effect against that dreadful disease, caused by filth or not, convinced all the civilized world, and it was adopted as the best means to protect people against it. Surely all the doctors and scientists of the world were not irrational beings when they were convinced of the efficacy of vaccination, and all the living doctors and scientists who daily see its effects are not mad people to encourage its practice if they were as convinced, as Mr. Mirza and the other cranks who oppose it, of its baneful and worthless effects. Mr. Mirza has sent us a few names of doctors who appear to be against vaccinations, but he is silent over the millions who are in its favour. If there are people who are blind and biassed against one proved thing, they

are the anti-vaccinationists who refuse to be impressed by the mass of evidence in favour of vaccination. They would urge their own ignorant opinions against that of experienced and careful people who have made the study of diseases and their prevention a life long affair. These anti-vaccinationists are not only stupid and blind, but, in our opinion, a dangerous class of people who would readily endanger the lives of innocent people with their ignorant and senseless objections. Nobody denies that there may not be a connection between insanitary condition and small-pox, and much less denies that an ideal sanitary condition may not eradicate it. But we are still far from reaching this Utopian condition, and until we do, the only protection is vaccination. The danger of "filthy pus" and so forth can only emanate from the brains of unscientific, ignorant folk who do not know what they are talking about. One thing is certain; Mr. Mirza has no right to talk on a subject about which he knows as much as the man in the moon. It is a pity that people like Mr. Mirza cannot be taught to hold their tongue and allow wiser persons to pass opinions on serious subjects.

Ed. REASON.

THE SALVATION OF INDIA.

Through evolution's fire and storm and	Fair India's mind is bent beneath
pain	the yoke
Great nations rise, proud queens of land	Of Christ and Allah, Brahma, Vishnu,
and sea ;	Shiva ;
But Himalaya's peaks and Ganges'	And Time and Reason bid her strike
plain	the stroke
Await the vision of the grand Rani.	That from the Gods for ever will
What bars this land of philosophic	relieve her
dower,	And then as glorious peer amid her
This land of genius in every art,	peers.
Of toiling raiyats and of Akbar's	Her head among the nations India rears.
power	
From earth's wide stage on which to	FREDERICK J. GOULD.
play her part?	

PARSI RITUALS AND CEREMONIES

A well known Parsi reformer has drawn our attention to several practices in connection with Parsi rituals and ceremonies which he thinks are objectionable. He would like our Association to take this question in hand and appeal to enlightened and progressive Parsis to discourage these practices. We will do so gladly and we hope that other Parsis who also are conversant with these practices and object to them will communicate with us on this subject. He instances the use of cow's urine as a case in point and rightly thinks that a progressive and enlightened community like the Parsis should give up the use of this product however ancient its sanction may have been in their ritual and ceremonies. In this connection it is interesting to

note that the Parsis are not averse to non-Parsis visiting their temples and even witnessing their interesting ceremonies. Some years ago Mlle. D. Menant was in India and took great interest in the Parsis, their origin and the preservation of their ancient religion in India. She has described all this in a pamphlet under the title of "Sacerdoce Zorastrien a Nausari" published in Paris some years ago. We will begin to publish a translation of it in "Reason" from next month and we are sure it will interest not only the Parsis but other people in India. Mlle. Menant was fortunate in witnessing the ceremony known as "Barashnum" at Nausari and her description of it is very interesting.

ED. REASON.

A NEW WORLD

By MIRIAM ALLEN DE FORD

THE earliest book dealing educationally with the problems of sex that I remember reading was a translation of Michelet's *La Femme*. From it I recollect chiefly his saccharine description of that delicate, almost evanescent creature, woman, who for a quarter of her life was a hopeless invalid, and whom sturdy man must shield and cherish because it lies within his power always to inflict on her the horrors and perils of maternity.

To recall such a passage, and to turn from it to gaze on a photograph of healthy, laughing Russian girls driving tractors or guiding locomotives, gives me the feeling that in my own person I have lived in two worlds.

Something of that same feeling comes with the reading of almost any recently printed book dealing with sex that comes from a reputable publisher. Between the two worlds lies a chasm, wrought by industrial development and by war, that no imagination can bridge adequately. On one side of the chasm are the swooning, parasitical female; the unregulated family; the polygamous male who seduced without compunction another's sister, but murdered the other man if he seduced his sister; Lecky's prostitute who was the guardian of the chastity of the protected lady. On the other are the self-supporting, life-participating human being who happens to be feminine; the family spaced or called into being by desire alone; the approximation to the single standard of liberalism, rather than to that single standard of asceticism proclaimed by pioneers from the other side of the chasm. Only the cultural lag represented by certain orthodox religious sects and by a few

suppressed or perverted fanatics remains to remind us that the old world is not yet all dead, that we owe much of our new freedom to nullification rather than to repeal of prohibitions. An old lady I met once pitied my childlessness; when I told her it was by my own wish she looked bewildered. "In my time, my dear," she said, "we thought God brought the children." Nowadays, I answered with more annoyance than kindness, "we know that science keeps them away." In the earlier books on sex, children, like earthquakes, were acts of God; in contemporary works it is taken for granted that they are scientifically controlled phenomena.

The attitude on social and psychological problems of the individual author does not alter this viewpoint, which (thanks to the fighters and martyrs of earlier days) is now implicit in any discussion of the relations of men and women. Here, for instance, are three books: *The Art of Being a Women*, by Olga Knopf, *Love and the Sex Emotions*, by William J. Fielding, and *The Sexual Side of Marriage*, by M. J. Exner. Dr. Knopf is an Adlerian, a pupil of Adler's, who is now teaching at the New School for Social Research in New York. Her point of view is a modification of the Adlerian will to power and masculine protest, combined with an apparent though unacknowledged agreement with the sexual dominance theory of Mathilde and Mathias Vaerting. Mr. Fielding is a more or less orthodox Freudian, and is also much concerned with the new discoveries and guesses concerning the psychological influence of the ductless glands. Dr. Exner's book is more specia-

lized and more obviously the work of a physician. In many ways it echoes or abridges—quite by coincidence, of course—Millard S. Everett's *The Hygiene of Marriage*, to my mind by far the best and most exhaustive non-technical work on that subject yet issued in the English language.

But every one of these disparate and in some fields mutually antagonistic writers concurs in approval of contraception; more, in taking it as a matter of course without need for much argument. Listen to Dr. Knopf.

No woman should be forced to give birth to a child if she does not wish to do so. If she really does not want it she cannot be a good mother, cannot educate her child in the right spirit. Since prevention is better than cure, we must say that it seems to us far better to have no children than to bring up problem children.

And though she goes on from there to argue that psychological re-education will cause many women who now do not want children to desire them (evading the strongest of all motives for contraception, the economic), even in this argument she says: "No one denies that a real physical illness, which would bring a woman in jeopardy of her life if she were to bear a child, is a justification for birth control." Unfortunately, even today this is not true; the official Roman Catholic attitude, for example, would be that the woman must bear children, whatever her physical condition, or else must remain continent. (I know of a case of recurring puerperal insanity, in which the victim was several times incarcerated in an insane asylum, then sent home as cured but warned against further pregnancy, only to be advised by

her priest that she must not deny her husband his marital rights, whatever the cost to herself. The final result was hopeless and permanent insanity, with no divorce possible for the bewildered father of four worse than motherless children.) But the fact that Dr. Knopf *thinks* no one denies her thesis, nor can carelessly say so, in an indication of how far that other world is behind us.

Mr. Fielding opens six pages of discussion of birth control (fitly enough in the chapter on "Marital Adjustment") by this summary:

Aside from the matter of expediency, there is a growing feeling among those who have reached a well considered understanding of the subject that birth control is in harmony with the great law of biologic evolution, and is therefore to that extent *natural*; that it is socially desirable, even necessary, and therefore *moral*; that it is conducive to greater individual happiness in the family relations and a boon to domestic tranquility and the institution of marriage, and therefore *ethically* impregnable.

Later on the remarks: "The ignorant notion of leaving procreation to chance in an anachronism far removed from twentieth century marriage ideals." He could not better sum up in a sentence the whole conclusion of our modern world.

As for Dr. Exner, his words almost repeat Mr. Fielding's:

Those who still insist upon animal analogy as a guide for human conduct, holding that sex union is justifiable only for the purpose of procreation, are in fundamental error.... in human beings sex serves the ends of love, *independent of procreation*.

And he, too, speaking of fear of pregnancy, as a "factor in maladjustment" in marriage, says :

For reasoning human beings in an age of supposed advanced culture every aspect of life that is not beyond volitional control should be brought under intelligent direction and control and not left to the play of haphazard influences. . . . The truth seems to be that common sense leads most couples sooner or later to resort to contraceptives in order to make child-bearing fit into an ordered family scheme even while they may retain mental uncertainty or reservations about the propriety or ethics of doing so. Such mental uncertainty is unfortunate for it necessarily partakes of the nature of fear and tends to inhibit sexual response and foster disharmony.

The truth of Dr. Exner's statement may be found in the statistics of birth control clinics, which reveal that adherents of anti-birth control religious sects apply for information and assistance in just about the same proportion as their proportion of the general population. The pity is that their intolerant and short-sighted religious leaders force them to do so under the penalty of "mental uncertainty," of regarding a wise action, at once self-preservative and altruistic,

as a "sin," thereby inevitably frustrating one of the chief inducements—the establishment of marital happiness—which has impelled them to it.

Yes, we have come a long way from that old world, from that abyss across which we can see dimly the pathetic figure of the young girl who entered marriage knowing nothing whatever of sex, taking it sorrowfully for granted that within a month she would be pregnant, and that thereafter children would follow every year or so and die for the most part before the next little brother or sister arrived. But our footsteps as we travel away from the chasm are still clogged by hands clutching at us from that other side. It is still impossible, for example, for exact and scientific instruction on the best methods of contraception to be published for the lay reader ; it is still dangerous in some states to teach such methods by word of mouth, in a few states even if one is a physician ; contraception is still classed with obscenity by the malodorous Comstock law of 1873, and the majority of our constituent-eyeing Congressmen are still afraid to repeal that law. There is plenty of work for us to do yet, heartening as is the evidence given by such works as these of how far we have already gone.

DEAN INGE ATTACKS JAMES DOUGLAS.

Impudent Article

SCURRILOUS STATEMENTS ABOUT Dr. BARNES.

Dean Inge, the Dean of St. Paul's, referred in a speech sometime ago to an article on Dr. Barnes, the Bishop of Birmingham.

At a Caxton Hall meeting of the modern Churchmen's Union Dean Inge said:—

"I wish to refer to something I would rather not refer to. Some days ago there appeared in one of the Sunday newspapers in England one of the most scurrilous and inexcusable attacks that I have ever read upon a man whom we all honour greatly: I mean the Bishop of Birmingham."

Impudent.

"One cannot suppose that a Fellow of the Royal Society, a bishop and a doctor of divinity would be very much troubled at having such a person as the writer of that article saying that his science was shallow and that he was no Christian and so on."

"But the impudence of the attack does not excuse it."

"Of course we all know that the bishop has lately been engaged in a troublesome disciplinary difficulty with one of his clergy."

"Most of us have a great deal of sympathy with the bishop."

"I feel, and others of us feel, that we do not want this union to be viewed as an ultra-Protestant body."

"Therefore, as a society we did not do anything to support the bishop in his recent difficulty. But it is a very different thing when such an attack as this is launched upon him."

"There is not one of us here who has not great respect for the courage of the bishop, whether one agrees with his views or not. There cannot be any excuse for printing such a scurrilous and, I should say, libellous attack upon his whole position and his character."

In the "Sunday Express" on October 16, Mr. James Douglas, in an article entitled "The Shameful Bishop," writes:—

"Once more the notorious Bishop of Birmingham is flinging apples of discord from the pulpit of Westminster Abbey. He denounces as 'theological decadents' those who exalt faith above science instead of exalting science above faith."

"Dr. Barnes is Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's first bishop. It was a blunder to send this crude apostle of science to Birmingham to wear the mystical mantle of Dr. Gore."

"Barnes is an intolerant Agnostic or sceptic who expects religion to lick the boots of science..."

"For eight years he has lost no opportunity to insult and persecute those who believe in what he disbelieves."

"He parroted with damnable iteration the unproved and unprovable theory that man is descended from an ape or an ape-like stock..."

"He trampled like a hog on the spiritual nobility of St. Francis of Assisi,"

We are glad that Dean Inge has drawn attention to the vulgar attacks of Mr. James Douglas on whom so ever is not in agreement with him on religious questions. Mr. Douglas takes a mean

advantage of his position as the editor of a London Sunday paper, which caters for the masses, to abuse whom so ever criticizes the Christian religion. He is one of those in England who belong to the Fundamentalist type of believers and his readers are generally in capable of judging his intellectual attainment. This man preaches a primitive theology and encourages absurd religious beliefs which are precisely the stuff which appeals to the intellectual culture of most of his readers. What is own beliefs actually are one, of course, must be left to surmise. He is a blatant and vulgar religious propagandist

and one is not surprised that he is always on the look out to attack people who have not a methodist mentality like his. When Mr. Whale, the President of the Rationalist Press, Association of London died suddenly some years ago, Mr. Douglas had the indecency to say that Mr. Whale, was punished for speaking against God. Every educated person in England and abroad was disgusted with him for this. This, by the way, gives one an idea of the belief of Mr. Douglas in the deity—a belief akin to the Polynesian or an African witch-doctor.

ED. REASON.

HAS RELIGION BENEFITTED HUMANITY?

[The following is by a thoughtful, working man, who makes no claim to erudition or scholarship. He fails to see that religion has benefitted humanity; on the contrary he thinks that it has done more harm than good in the world. In this country, at any rate he thinks that it has not been a power for good as a good deal of India's misfortunes can be traced to it. We print his article in his own words without any embellishment or pruning].—(Ed. REASON).

Religion as I see appears to be as old as the hills. It seems to me that it was born with the first gleam of human consciousness. That it owes its birth to ignorance and instinctive fear is admitted by most people who have given a thought to the subject. For most people, even now, religion is based on fear, and ceremonies and rituals have been invented to allay that fear. As a matter of fact, *one can trace many of our present day ceremonies and rituals to the primitive races who were dominated by the phenomena of nature and ancestor worship which they did not understand. However much the ceremonies and rituals of the religions of civilized people may be*

disguised by refinement, pomp and pagaentry it is nonetheless true that they have savage origins and it is only by tracing them to those sources that many of these ceremonies can be understood. The civilized man who prays in a cathedral, temple or mosque little imagines that there is no difference in his attitude towards the unknown to that of the primitive man who offers his homage to the invisible spirits in a forest clearing.

It is on such consideration that one cannot for a moment accept the assurance of priests that religion was instituted by God, If religion was instituted by God it is reasonable to expect that it would have been a soul elevating function

from the beginning and not subject to the laws of the evolution of growth as we see it. People who accept all that priests tell them without giving the same a little thought are simply blind followers who follow a religion more by sheer force of habit than sincere and reasonable conviction. They ignorantly accept as God's work that which is only the inventions of priest-craft, and as the same is taught from early childhood, small wonder that most people are the slaves and sport of priests, parsons, gurus, swamis, moulvis, mobeds and rabbis. They simply cannot escape this dominating influence.

Further, God would not as a supreme being, perfect, all knowing and just allow Himself to be an object of speculation and fear by the creatures for the benefit of priestcraft. Would a good and just God and all knowing and powerful favour the existence and prosperity of multitudes of fanatics, bigots, superstitious and intolerant people who have traded and still trade on religion and have caused so much misery in the world? Would He have allowed His Holy name to be degraded by such people who make a mockery of religion? Great religious reformers like Christ, Krishna, Gautama, Budha, Mahomed, and Zoraster taught a simple religion which could be accepted by most reasonable people, but crafty priests soon disfigured the beautiful and primitive creed of these teachers and made religion what it is now in the world.

Priests while pretending to work for the spiritual welfare of man are themselves insatiable seekers after this world's riches. Under the cloak of sanctity, piety and modesty they sow the seed of hatred, pride, envy, malice and egotism in man's heart. They set up barriers between

people while they talk of peace and love, and they curse all who do not readily fall under their sway. They love the rich and despise the poor, and in the bitter struggles man has fought for his emancipation from slavery to freedom priests have always been on the side of the powerful and have been deaf to the pitiful appeal of the weak.

It is really a paradox that despite all the lessons he has received and the bitter experience he has gone through man still blindly follows the priest. This can only be explained by the innate stupidity and dullness of the average man. Such being the case with humanity it makes me think that the task of Rationalism must necessarily be an up-hill affair. It will take a long time; it will require much education and a good deal of persuasion to undeceive man of his spiritual leaders. Not until Rationalism helps to make the scales before his eyes drop. Meanwhile let us persevere. We, ourselves, who are fortunate for being enlightened, we owe the light we behold to the fearless pioneers who braved much in expressing their sincere opinion and vivifying thought. Thanks to them we are able to day to see the light, and naturally this makes us anxious that our brothers and sisters who are still in the darkness should also see it. We are able to realize, in a manner that they cannot, that religion has not improved humanity at all; neither morally or ethically has religion as it stands today, done the slightest good to mankind. Man has improved by his own social instinct, and the experience he has gained after a long tedious journey. In the West he has witnessed much savagery, wars, persecutions, inquisition, all caused by religion. Here in India one sees the bitter hatred between two

great communities who should have brotherly feelings but for their difference of creed. Caste faction, untouchability, communalism, bigotry and superstitions are actual hindrances that bar progress and prosperity. So long that priestcraft will be a power in the land it will be useless to expect any intellectual and

political progress in this country and the sooner our leaders realize their the less we expect they would surrender to the blandishment of these crafty "spiritual pilots" who have the satanic ambition of driving mankind as they like for their own glorification.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

Blessing of Houses,

Some days back as I was driving along Dadar, I saw an old Parsee Priest moving from corner to corner of a demarkated plot of ground. I understood that he was blessing the foundation of a new structure that was to be constructed on this site. This "blessing" or "consecration" of new land, houses, furniture or any new thing, dates from antiquity. It is a relic of fear. Some primitive tribes smeared their door posts with blood to appease the forest-gods: others killed a fowl or a dog on the roof of a new temple; amongst other tribes, continence was enjoined upon all the members, so long as a new village was under construction, and this rule was so strict that if any couple broke it the whole tribe migrated to another site. Today, at the successful termination of any construction, there is always a naming or house-warning ceremony. This, in itself, does not seem irrational. One is fully justified in sharing his joy with his friends, and thanking his God, if he considers him a friend, for the help he has given. The only point is that "God" has so little to do with the success of human endeavour. It is noteworthy that the religious ceremony is being gradually overlapped by one of merry-making. Today, Governors and Collectors

lay foundation stones and wives or daughters of company directors name ocean-liners. What is more, instead of holy water, champagne is used. A friend of mine who purchased a new car, after decorating it with flowers, broke a bottle of champagne on it. We are all well-wishers of human prosperity. Let us celebrate every sign of it, be it the purchase of a new car, or the construction of a new house, by merriment and jollity, and not by attempting to appease the wrath of a jealous God.

* * *

Campaign against Jews.

Herr Hitler has risen to fame in a very short time. The fact that he is now on the top cannot but be taken to mean that the majority of Germany wants him to be there, whether out of love for him or fear of him. Still, his present campaign against the Jews, does not seem worthy of the great Germany. Whatever might be the political complications, it is difficult to assume that all the Jews in Germany are Communists, and so enemies of the country. Communism and Jewry cannot be synonymous. But the latest of Hitler is worst still. He wants to fight against the intellectual dominance by the Jews in Germany. But why? If they have

so far dominated Germany, then that country has every reason to be grateful to them for what they have done. One cannot shut his eyes to the fact that a large number of the cleverest men and women in finance, science, literature, art, all the world over are Jews, and this is true in Germany as well. The Jew has been persecuted from the time Christianity has come into power, and it is perhaps this persistent persecution that has developed in the Jew those qualities that spell success. Without entering into the political aspect of the question which does not concern us here, one can safely say that a persecution of any community because of it is intellectually superior should to be condemned by all lovers of progress. Such a step, if carried to its logical conclusion, would mean topsyturvying the whole world. If the treatment given to the Jews is generalised our civilisation will decay, and what has been built up slowly during these laborious centuries will be destroyed. The triumph of the Nazis in this direction is a menace to civilisation. The last war has quickened our civilisation; new forces, like Communism, have been let loose, and all these are for the progress of humanity and for the elevation of human intellect. Much as we wish that Hitler should bring prosperity to his country we cannot wish him any success in his campaign against intellectual superiority. His present stand is unworthy of a great leader as it savours very strongly of inferiority complex. Our sympathies are for the German Jews, to whom we take our hats

off for their contribution to the progress of humanity.

* * *

Prostitution.

Last month saw the annual report of the local Vigilance Association. This is the moral counterpart of the Public Health Department of the City. Perhaps a better name would be Public Morals Department, and we might have a Director of Morals. One more appointment and what a scramble there would be for it even if it was honorary. One cannot forget Bernard Shaw's remarks on the Pope's crusade against sex appeal the more so as, if such our appointment is created, our padres will be all in the running. But that is not the point now. One of the important achievements of this Association is the disruption of the local prostitute colony. This was one of the "sights" of Bombay, and probably the local guides and taxi drivers will regret this step. I presume that the main reason why the Vigilance Association was so keen to remove this "blot" on the city, was because they want to end prostitution in this city. There are various local acts which make this profession a difficult one. Still it has not languished. Sir H. Dastur, our Chief Presidency Magistrate, made some very sensible remarks when he said no amount of legislation will ever rid any country of this trade. It is as old as the hills, because the need that it supplies is also just as old. It existed even when polygamy and polyandry was practised. It is the urgent craving for the

immediate satisfaction of sexual desire that is at the bottom of it. Men who patronise prostitutes are those that have not the patience to develop friendships, to risk losses, or to face the searchlight of society. Most of them are dirty and impure, but one that like some other functions of the body must be exercised and in as shady a manner as possible. Others have not got the time to win a woman's affection, they are prepared to give nothing and desire nothing else than sex. For this class, a colony of prostitutes is certainly better. It is like going to a general stores and picking up what you want. But the absence of such a colony will not keep them for securing what they want. Though a large number of these public women have been decoyed into this business, yet a few years of life makes them devotees, partly because of the diffidence of the treatment that society would give them and greatly because it gives them easy money. There

are people who will secure these women patrons, and men these women, whenever they want them. The present tendency not to consider abominable sex-life outside marriage must diminish prostitution to a remarkable extent. But this will be only among the educated class of people. But to the other, the drunkard, the profligate gambler who, flushed with success, wants to celebrate it with a sexual orgy, prostitutes are the only outlet. Far better then, that these women are permitted to carry on their profession in certain parts of the city where they can be medically or otherwise supervised, rather than letting them loose as a nomadic population, dotted amidst people who do not look upon this profession with any favour. Such is the case in London. We certainly appreciated the efforts of Vigilance Association in fighting against the importation of girls, and wish it all success.

ALI AKBAR.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS.

To facilitate payment of the annual subscription, members are informed that henceforward the Hony. Treasurer will send them a copy of "Reason" per V. P. P. for the annual subscription, two months after it falls due. This procedure will be followed in all cases except when the members write and inform him otherwise. We trust that they will be good enough to accept the V. P. demand.

D. R. D. WADIA,

Hony. Treasurer, R. A. I.

5-12, Queen's Road, Fort,

BOMBAY.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hon'y. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NEWS AND HAPPENINGS.

This year two notable centenaries will be celebrated. That of Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll in America and Charles Bradlaugh in England. Both Ingersoll and Bradlaugh were valiant fighters in the cause of Rationalism. Ingersoll, who has been described as the Voltaire of America, was a brilliant orator who

attracted thousands at the meetings he held. It is no exaggeration to say that he converted thousands to Rationalism and that many who read his lectures and essays carefully cannot but be convinced of the absurdity of religion and of a belief in supernaturalism. His very name was a terror to the American

ecclesiastics who hated him as the ecclesiastics of France hated Voltaire. Albert Einstein, the famous scientist will sail to America to be present at the celebration of his centenary.

* * * *

Bradlaugh's name needs no introduction to Indian readers. He fought with success the conservatism of officialdom in religious matters in England. Few, in these days, perhaps realize what were the difficulties of unbelievers in England when Bradlaugh started his campaign against bigotry and fanaticism in that country. The cowardly treatment he received at the hands of religious bullies in the House of Commons is well known; but they were no match for Bradlaugh who won his points all along in the teeth of the fiercest and most determined opposition. Even now, there are still to be found in England malicious slanderers who occasionally try to bespatter his memory with mud. Not very long ago, his aged daughter, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, had to defend the memory of her father from the attacks of a cowardly knight who claimed to have known Bradlaugh.

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It has been reported to us that a certain journal, which boasts to be very progressive and claims to be the best newspaper in India, in very much against Rationalism and makes it a point never to mention Rationalistic topics in its columns. There is nothing surprising in this. To expect the contrary is to naively assume that all editors of newspapers are necessarily very enlightened people. Many of them are not, and on the question of religious thought and scientific knowledge are as benighted as their most ignorant readers. It must be remembered that many of these people

have become editors of papers not on account of their erudition and scholarship but simply on account of the routine they have acquired in that profession. Many of them are as full of prejudice and bias against free-thought as their most bigoted readers. They could not be otherwise as some of them actually hail from countries where the most ridiculous religious restrictions still prevail; where one may not be happy on a Sunday and may be prosecuted if found laughing in the streets on that day; where one is considered holy and respectable when he makes himself very sad and solemn on a Sunday and spends the day in a closed room with a bottle of whisky and a Bible. To expect people who hail from such places to possess liberal ideas and thoughts is to expect the impossible. By their very nature they cannot be that any more than a donkey can claim to be a race horse. Rationalism can now afford to ignore them whether they are editors of papers or ministers of kirks.

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It must also be remembered that some of these papers always aim at aping "The London Times" which generally taboos rationalistic questions. It was not so very long ago that that journal poured ridicule over the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Even now it would attach more importance to the harangue of a bishop than to the most important pronouncement of any well-known scientist. The fact is that most newspapers in English speaking countries find it more profitable to pander to ignorance and credulity than to the cause of truth, and to boost superstition as it is still the great force that rules the world.

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While the Latin countries, including Mexico, and the Slavs are divorcing themselves from religion and superstition, it is remarkable that the Teutonic races, including the Anglo-Saxons, seem to rally round religion and get all the political support they can from the Churches. In Germany there is serious interference with free thought activities and great encouragement to religious sects. The same is true of Czechoslovakia, and in America the greatest bigots and fanatics are people of Anglo-Saxon origin. In England the clergy seem to be gaining the upper hand. They have recently succeeded in imposing their will on Sunday observance, and there, one may not even indulge in innocent games on a Sunday without the interference of the clergy and other narrow minded bigots. The British Broadcasting Company may now be described as nothing else than an organisation for the furtherance of religious propaganda. Great efforts are being made for a religious revival and already the Methodist Church claims great success in its propaganda, while the Salvation Army, with all its childish demonstrations and manifestations, is looked upon with great respect and admiration. The Y.M.C.A., which does not deny that it exists for religious propaganda, is a power in the land and even the Scouting Organisation exists on a religious basis.

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Such being the case in England it is quite in the nature of things that such a well known reactionary as Sir Reginald Craddock, an ex-Governor of Burma, should try to introduce a Bill in the House of Commons the object of which is clearly to kill Free-thought propaganda in that country. The measure he wishes to introduce is called "The Seditious

and Blasphemous teaching of Children Bill." He is strongly supported in this by the Duchess of Atholl, and doubtless he will receive the cordial support of the Anglican Clergy and many others who have vested interest in the Churches. The Bill reads as follows:—

"Any person other than parent who teaches seditious or blasphemous matter to children under the age of sixteen or reads to, or sells to, or distributes among such children any document containing seditious or blasphemous matter; or makes, publishes, sells, distributes or has in his possession for sale or distribution any document containing seditious or blasphemous matter for the purpose or with intention of its being used for teaching such children, or being read to, or sold to, or distributed to among such children shall be guilty under this Act."

Ridiculous as this Bill is it may be passed into law as the forces of reaction are, at present, very strong in England. One, there, has only to raise the bogey of Bolshevism, Communism, and the "Anti God Campaign" to find sympathetic support from a large number of thoughtless but emotional persons. England, despite her boast to be the land of liberty, has yet to travel a long distance to be quite emancipated from religious bias or prejudice. The masses there are still under the sway of a powerful clergy and the aristocracy naturally will support such organisations that ensure its existence. It is after all only an act of self-preservation.

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In contrast with these happenings in England, it is refreshing to learn that France is determined not to let the children fall again into the hands of priests for education. Quite recently a French

Bishop did his utmost to raise prejudice against mixed schools and secular education in general in France. The French Parliament defeated this attempt completely and now the Bishop perhaps realises that the French are in no mood to encourage superstition in their country. As a matter of fact, the French are too advanced and have outgrown the belief that only religious education can make a nation moral. One often hears the talk that since the late war there is a religious revival in France. Needless to say that all this is pure imagination; a case of the wish being father to the thought.

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It is solemnly reported that the Pope of Rome inaugurated the "Holy Year" by ascending the "Holy Staircase" on his knees and fell into deep veneration before the "Holy relics" kept on the top of the staircase in gold cases. Very edifying indeed! The Almighty Creator of the Universe must have been very impressed and greatly moved to see such a sight on the tiny planet Earth, one of the

smallest objects in the Cosmos. A wonderful God he must be to be interested in all these childish pranks. To think that we are living in the twentieth century! Why, we are undoubtedly back to ædivealism to judge by all that is happening in the world. Small wonder that our newspapers think this sort of things to be most important news that must be terribly interesting to the whole world.

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A Jew complained to us the other day that it is very unfair to them to allow Cinema representations of the crucifixion of Christ and other exhibitions depicting the Jews in the act of cruelly murdering Jesus Christ. There is no doubt that this should not be allowed as it tends to foster the latent hatred Christians still feel against the Jews. It is remarkable that the present anti-semitic feeling is very strong in those countries where the Passion Play is an annual feature. Would the Jews be permitted to enact a play likely to excite the hatred of Christians?

[The Editor is sorry to announce that the promised translation of Mlle Menant's "Sacerdoce Zorastrien" will not appear in these columns for unavoidable and unforeseen reasons.]

INTIMATIONS ON COMPARATIVISM.

Ramanuja broke the pledge of secrecy. Mounting the temple--spire he gave broadcast the Mantra (sacred-word) to which his Guru initiated him. Throughout the multitude Ashtakshari (the eight syllabled word) rang, "Om, Name Narayanaya". The preceptor took offence, and visited on him condemnation, for to hell went all rebellious spirits. "What does it matter" was the reply made by the

reflective disciple. "Let me, an individual be damned that the race may be saved." It is the spirit of sacrifice that pays with one's own life for others' salvation. He called in the masses, the lowly and the ignorant; they received the message, beyond the bounds of caste. Centuries of Vaishnavism in the south are the curious comment upon his spirit. Face to face in his life we saw it, but do we follow it?

The idea of God as the Personality had by the time of Ramanuja, come to stay beyond the pale of Hinduism. Jehovah was the Jewish God. Jesus came of the Father in heaven. Mahomet was the prophet of monotheism under Allah. Near at home, the humane teachings of the Buddha had affected adversely the strict adherence to the vedic text, which Sankara's Monism had in part repaired. But the national allegiance to scriptural authority did little to convert the Nirvana into the abode of positive existence. The Brahman was no personality that dwelt in Vaikuntha. Sankara's system rested not on devotion, Bhakti, to the Supreme Being, but on the intellectual solution through an attributeless (Nirguna) principle. It was an ideal pitched at a greater height than can be reached by ordinary human comprehension. Its rationality is beyond question. The upanishadic interpretation leading to it is a process of logicisation of the Vedanta. But the ring-fence of metaphysical Hinduism cannot stand the stress from without in favour of a faith more satisfying emotionally. Monotheistic teachings that were consolidating communities outside of Hinduism would not be denied their place under the banner of the Vedic texts. Their-reinterpretation followed and Narayana or Vishnu was installed as the Personal God; Bhakti or devotion, humility, service were the means of reaching *near to Him*. I assert that more than any God in the Hindu Pantheon, Vishnu is the brother of the Hebrew Jehovah, the Christian Father and Islamic Allah. The kinship is closer among these than with any other form of faith that Vedic Hinduism produced. Not simply in their theistic form, in the sense of believing in the existence of a personal being, but in the relation of man to that Being, in the

method of approach to the place attainable by human perfection, not to mention the parallel forms of ritual, sacrament and practice, is the unity of religious thought manifested in them, though otherwise obviously remote faiths. The Vedantic Brahman is invested with attributes, good qualities (Kalyana Gunas). God, the Absolute, is good, kind, benevolent and merciful. He is infinite love. His kindness is spontaneous and causeless (Nirhetuka) and extends irrespective of the deserts of man. The belief that infinite Providence somehow assumed the *role* of a finite being, man, as an incarnation is also common with Christianity and the cults within Hinduism; the latter extended the incarnation doctrine to all stages in the evolution of life from the fish upward to other animals under water and on land. The humanly conceived gods carried their peculiar insignia of the cross the Chakra (wheel) and the trident. In these faiths God is inaccessible directly, except through the intervention of the mediator, the redeemer (Purushakaran). The saviour gains the importance of divinity himself, and is supposed to bring about the close relation between God and man. While the Vedantist believes in the attainment of oneness with Brahma by shedding ignorance (Avidya) the devotionalists' conception of Moksha is different. In heaven, man attains all the good, divine qualities (Kalyana gunas) but he is not absorbed in divinity. He stands apart in all the purity of an immortal soul. Its life on earth is a small episode. The basis of morality is the concern for the well-being of this other worldly spirit. It is matter for reflection whether the human basis for mundane conduct taught by Buddhism was in any way improved upon by

replacing the mainspring of morality by the cobweb of supernaturalism. Due regard to the claims of the living neighbour was emphasized by the theistic doctrine that service of man was the highest form of worship of the God. But when the issue had to be joined between God and the neighbour the latter always went to the wall. God lifted the fatal sword and slew the believer in an alien creed. The grim history of religious wars and persecutions recorded by Europe in the middle ages is analogous to the mortal conflicts between the Devas and Asuras or Rakshasas of whom we read much in the religious literature of the East. If Jehovah was a jealous *vengeful God*, Vishnu was none the less martial in spirit. He wore all the weapons of warfare which successive ages of civilisation invented:—the mace, the bow, the sword, and the wheel. A closer understanding of the origins of human belief discloses the workings of the same principles in the field of religion as in any other field of human knowledge or activity. Primitive notions are improved upon, adjacent notions incorporated, original texts added to, amended, and re-interpreted, and alien Gods merged in and assimilated into the primary deity. The benefit to be derived by tracing the parallelism in the march of religious conception in divergent faiths is apparent. Though schisms and clashing denominations arise in the same church, and the similarity in ideas is no guarantee of sympathetic disposition, a realisation that these varied faiths are the product of human genius circumstanced in its setting in time and place may serve to blunt the edge of mutual antagonism that was fostered by the mistaken primitive belief in an exclusive divine revelation. The breaking away

of the doctrine of the 'chosen few', and the Elect, is best reflected by the comparative attitude which thus tends to promote human solidarity.

Discipline has long been recognised to be essential for human well-being. But the unquestioning submission to the point of the elimination of individual reason enforced under the spiritual hierarchy of the pontificate in the Roman Church and the Guru-parampara (line of preceptors) in Vaishnavism is discipline carried to excess, so that the means is mistaken for the end. It emphasizes the craving for power and domination as ingrained in human aspiration. Linked with this is the high emotionalism and *religious fervour that has no place in an intellectualism of independence, of doubt*. God is infallible, so are his representatives on earth, a confidence sometimes misplaced, sometimes even abused. Other superficial parallelisms are indicated in apostles and the Holy See and the Mutt, the Pope and the Jeer-swami, Baptism through the elements, water and fire, sacraments, the Eucharist and the Mass, and the consecration of the food-offering to Vishnu before partaking of it, and others which closer examination may reveal. Even the belief in divine revelation in the Bible as the word of God goes with the notion that the scriptures of the Vedas are of divine origin, and Swayam-Bhoo (self-born). The textual disregard evinced by Buddhistic independence endangered itself and the high moral value was countered by the metaphysical speculation proceeding upon the interpretation of the Upanishads. The cycle rolled from Pantheism and ritualism to atomism thence through monism to monotheism. To the Vaishnava, worship of the other deities is forbidden. By detaching our-

selves from the historical creeds, we shall be enabled to view as from an aeroplane the rotation of the cycle and formulate laws of the evolution of religious thought just as an investigation of the facts of material existence helps in the discovery of natural laws. Religious conflicts are akin to sanitary crises brought about by the presence of undesired "foreign matter." To note the history of these crises and the issue of the graph of their rise and fall, benefits the race by experience in a vital field. The life of every founder is rich in lessons for all time. To make the religious instinct the basis of the world's sociological order, the comparative stand is the facile position that reveals the essence of that instinct on ultimate analysis. It no doubt involves the shedding of some of our orthodoxies. Orthodoxies in the past could remain exclusively airtight, fortified in their respective domains. Though every religion had its idea of God, it denoted very differently, to differing varieties. Exclusive devotionism, like emphatically assertive nationalism led to warfare, distrust and destruction. The spirit of religionism as a whole is opposed to the rule of the brain. This opposition is illustrated in the lives of philosophers and thinkers that have been victimised by creeds and cults. Set against blind faith, the metaphysician is looked upon as a danger to society by setting at naught accepted notions recorded in religious books and taught by the priests. Socratic defiance ended in hemlock-poison. The rack, the burning stake, and the prison-bar have been the lot of many a seer. Even the blending of the intellect and religion as in Sankara did not get over the stigma of unbelief and *Prachhanna Baudha* (Buddhism in

disguise) is one of the adjectives that he earned. It was not always disbelief in God (though instances there are of that type also) that brought on fatal results, but non-conformity in even the slightest degree, in any matter of minor detail in ritual or the credal form of the articles of faith involved serious consequences. Mostly it was a pretext rather than the reason for running down the bold philosopher.

The God of religion is different from the God of Philosophy, and, as will hereafter be shown, from the use of the same word by scientists. What to the religionist is the personality of the Father, the Supreme Being, transforms itself in the speculations of the metaphysician into a principle of cosmology, an absolute something, the first cause, back of the universe. And as the universe including this earth is visibly affected by contraries, the pairs of opposites, heat cold, light, darkness, life, death, pleasure pain, virtue and the reverse, the philosopher elevates his first principle (the God) to a plane higher than those conflicts may reach notionally. In this respect he differs fundamentally from religion which attributes to divinity the good qualities conceived as having been for human benefit and advantage. Religion seldom takes count of anything beyond human gains. God is the good man raised to the power of (*n*). If it is anthropomorphic in its derivation, it is circumscribed by human aspiration in its outlook, and does not reach farther than the man-centre in its grasp of the universe. On the other hand, God as the metaphysician's cosmological principle is an abstraction, void of attributes, sexless, formless, and beyond the pale of human morals. He is a Nirguna Brahmin.

Save the confusion attendant on supernaturalism, there is nothing that is common between the God of the religions and the philosophic divinity. In religion He is the superlative of eminence and in metaphysical calculation He is the logical superlative, projected in thought to heights beyond comprehension. In one sense the metaphysical God is higher than the religious one, in that He is enfranchised from all human obligation, which attaches all too closely to the God the pietist. In another sense, however, He falls below the needs of religions, as an abstract principle even of the entire cosmological field does not call forth the fervour and devotion that exalts human feeling, ennobles human sentiment and tends to purify human relations. Electro-Magnetism, Gravitation, and a host of other principles conceived in the universe are hardly the objects of worship, whatever their potency or utility in the scheme of existence. A principle that explains these is no more than a mere principle, calling forth no high adoration.

The philosophic attempt to resolve the mystery and miracle in life in terms of cold logic, is looked down upon by religion as an inroad into the realm of God, condemnable even as blasphemy. System-building is no doubt a failure in philosophy, or we should not have plural systems. The philosopher feels that religion has not said the final word on the destiny of man. The key to heaven was only in the hand of the Christ, the prophet Mahomed, or Ramanuja. The comparative metaphysical attitude snatches away the key from their hands. But the conflicts, inconsistencies, the pairs of opposite state equally in the face of supernatural logic (as philosophy may be called) as they are the despair of religion which discards

logic in any form. Maya (illusion) or Avidya (ignorance) is but a shift to explain the in-coming of differences. To derive ignorance from an all-comprehending principle or to trace illusion to the highest light is to resolve mystery by wrapping it in the shroud of a greater mystery. Metaphysics divorced from the facts of life is of little comfort as religion based on blind faith in a problematical Personality is of doubtful utility. It is really the fact of life that matters and not our poetic imaginings about it. Poetry enters into the formulæ of all religions, poetry and metaphor. It is the faculty for comparison, for revealing resemblances in apparently incongruous facts that marks the highest talent in man, his reason. Metaphysical discourses too, proceed on poetic lines heightened by the application of the poetic sense to common experience. Man's entire reasoning power and imagination flows in in-born poetic channels. Analogy plays the leading role everywhere, in religion, philosophy, and science. Our best poets are leaders of profound religious thought. Spiritual value holds the high place that it does owing to the elevating influence brought to bear upon life by the poet, the musician and the artist. But the mere heightening of the spiritual value through poetry does not *per se* further human well-being in a world not devoid of adverse material conditions. The medicine man is the descendant of the spiritual healer. In him are practicable the beginnings of science. Magic and medicine are in their turn rooted in poetry. God is supposed to work his wondrous powers through spells and incantations, talismans, powders and pills. Conditions of disease and health, properties of matter, and the phenomena of consciousness are subjected to searching

analysis and laws are formulated by processess of induction. Induction is one phase of the functioning of the poetry. The scientist is satisfied with his formulæ and does not trouble himself until his confidence in them is rudely shaken by the discovery of rebellious exceptions. If the exceptions in their turn lend themselves to discipline under fresh formulations, science assumes a complacency in its own method. Meanwhile, the mysterious person of religion, and the absolute of philosophy peep into the scientist's mind at every stage of his failure. God acquires a connotation in physical science that is peculiarly its own. "Chance" "Caprice" "Defiance of law" "accident" "indeterminacy" these are the ancientist's divine attributes. When physical laws do not work, when hypothesis fail, Science brings in its God. While religion ascribes the workings of material forces on regular lines to the wisdom of theological omni-science, science imputes the failure of these regularities to a capricious omnipotence. To religion, God is the law-giver. To philosophy, God is the law itself, the principle. To science God is the breakdown of the law. Yet religion is proud that both philosophy and science agree in its conclusions on theism. If I were to believe in A and my neighbour were to hold in non-A, it transcends sense to imply that we agree in our beliefs.

How then does it become possible that the diverse fields of thought, of religion, philosophy and science, appear to pull together in the face of these incongruities? Ascending on the hill-top, we fail to discern the marked boundaries of the distinct fields below. By closing our eyes to the conflicts, by not probing into them sufficiently deeply, by building separate water-tight compartments in our brains

to hold them free from interaction, we manage to believe in them all. The answer can be viewed in two aspects, the historical and the logical. History is witness that the three sisters never pulled together. They pull in contrary directions, that one away from the other. Religion persecuted philosophy much and science more. Intelligent reflection had not been its strong point. The mysticism of the poet, the transcendentalism of ecstasy, these find favour greater in the fortresses of faith than cool logic or prosaic deduction. In its turn, philosophy attacks blind faith and the limited vision of material science. Absolutism is her pride. Superlativism the ideal and the method. Relativity is her enemy. Comparison is odious in metaphysical nostrils. Somehow, somewhen, somewhere, the obvious contradictions in life melt away. They merge in a principle of perfect unity, derived from the zero. Science ill affords to spare neither. In religion it sees the despair of its method. In metaphysics it sees a premature unwarranted extension of its hypothetical bearings. There is a pitiful tenderness attending upon the alternate affections of the human brain in successive turns. Fevered controversies and worse have resulted from adherence to one or other of the conflicting mental attitudes. At this age of advance, the problem is yet an unsolved contradiction.

The logical answer to the question of the co-existence of apparently conflicting forms of culture lies in the fact that men seldom employ their comparative sense. Our learning is arranged on a pigeon-hole basis ordinarily employed in the post-office. Ideas relative to one field are not permitted to soak into another field. The isolation is perfect, so the contradiction is suffered to remain

dormant. Religious truths are truths in themselves and do not lend themselves to scientific tests. Any misgiving regarding their veracity is visited with excommunication and social pressure. The poetic phantasies of philosophy transcend science and are held to be true in an absolute sense, though through the limitations of our mundane faculties they do not always agree with scientific observation. Somehow the universe is unlimited, as well as a huge limited-liability concern with God as the managing director, and man the servant raised to the ranks of subordinate partnership which dissolves through misconduct. The logic of limitation does not function in space-time continuum. Not by closing our mind to the discrepancies may we successfully explain them. We should descend from the hill-top that obliterated the field-marks, get into the fields themselves straightway, and explore the features of comparison and contrast, should we seek to have the real first hand knowledge of their position and character. In an armchair it should become easy enough to close the eyes, and proclaim the unitary indications of all religions, philosophies and sciences. It is the unity of abstraction, of the refusal to see, and to see it whole. Real knowledge comes from probing into the constitution dissecting, the respective anatomy and prescribing the proper remedy. In the conflicts among phases of thought, in the wars of ideas and ideals, we see life, alive and kicking. By ignoring it, we deceive none but ourselves.

Shall we of this generation allow the struggle to go on, without putting forth our efforts towards the solution? Is there a method whereby a settlement may be facilitated? Is there an arbiter

who may decide between the intellectual belligerents?

Poetry sees religion in naturalism alike as in the supernatural. August Comte faced the religion of divinity and its superlativism with his positivism as the religion of humanity. "Sahsra Sirsha Purusha, Sahasrakshas sahasra pat" said the Purusha Sukta. The universe-man (Virat Purusha) the Great-Being, has thousand heads, thousand eyes, thousand feet. This conception of the great-being fits in admirably with Comte's cult of humanity, the masses as we proudly call them. It is the masses that are myriad-headed, multiple eyed, and manylimbed. They are not the defectives that we sometime wrongly suppose. We that use the name are among them, and the grandfathers of the species that top the lists in genius, culture and resource. Our best philosophers, poets, scientists, artists, saints apostles, gods, demi-gods are among the masses. Their head is bigger, eyes keener, limbs stronger than you or I can claim. I may not presume to teach the masses anything good or great; I seek to learn everything good and great from them. Should I endeavour to do counterwise, I should place myself in the awkward position of holding a school to the genius of the Buddha, the prophet Mahomet, Moses and St. Paul, Vyasa and Kalidas, Dante and Shakespeare, Archimedes and Newton. These are the masses the earth has produced and is producing. They, and their close off spring and intimate following, represent the army clad in the armour of religion, philosophy, poetry, and science. They are the true Virat Purusha.

Positivism did its bit in focussing the attention of human service as the best, the only form of the spiritual worship.

Religion had taught before it that the way of prayer unto God is the way of charity and service unto fellow-man. But will positivism come to stay, and how? That is the practical side of the question. The method of making positivism, or natural religion, a successful factor in human life does not lie in the direction of the notional disregard of the existence of the diversities of thought. They are no illusions but hard, concrete facts of life. It is the spirit of comparison that should promote harmony, and not the turning away from every other from except the one to which the accident of birth has given us the heritage. Every great life has its lesson, its particular epitome. As steps in the continuity of culture, as waves in the stream of intellectual and spiritual life, their names endure to virtual immortality. By exclusiveness and isolation we pervert their example. The religious bigot, the closed-systematiser, and the text-book scientist that would not revise his edition, they are the foes of truth and of progress.

We break the barriers when we launch upon comparative study, and begin to frame hypotheses however tentative, though they be. By carrying logic into the church, the mosque and the temple we found our faith on sounder footing. Non-conformity does not scare away truth. If conformity does, the worse for it and not for truth. We should prefer truth even should it cost us our conformity. If science discloses that this earth of which religion makes so much is a tiny planet, that imbedded in the strata of its crust lies written the history of forms of life strange to man, that man of whom religion and philosophy makes the centre of cosmological attention is no different from the worms that we learn

to despise, we shall accept the proofs and seek to mould our faith in a form agreeable thereto; neither shall we try to burn the books on astronomy, geology &c., nor seek to condemn their authors to punishment in another world, if we cannot injure them in this, nor console ourselves in the thought that it might be so from the scientists' point, but from the point of true religion, it might be different.

Much as we may try to keep our ideas thus insulated in distinct sealed covers, human psychology is a miracle of wondrous assimilation, the process by which we bring forth organically united concepts. The picture of the Viratpurusha representing the totality of human life, the masses, as it is called, is an instance in point. It is now known in physiology, that the human body is a multicellular organism, wherein human consciousness is different from the sum-total of the individual cell-consciousness, of all the cells constituting it. If thus, the cells in conjunction do give rise to a form of mental life higher than theirs, individual treating each member of the community of man as a single cell, may we not reason out the existence of a form of consciousness on a plane higher than that of any individual? The best cell within the human organism could not have arrogated to it the order of mental life that belongs only to man as a whole-being. So, may none of us know the mental workings of the Great Being constituted by the sum-total of humanity. Into the growth of that collective mind have entered and will enter, the contributions of all religions, philosophies and sciences. Already the indications of comparativism are there. The Railway, telegraph, and the steamship have made the last century one of increased locomotion, and increased cellular

activity is needs reflected in the changes in the constitution of the entire organism. Today, quicker bonds of communication and adjustment enliven us more than ever before. To think that the wireless and the aeroplane have no bearing upon our spiritual life would amount to shortness of vision. The destructive anti-utilitarian user of scientific invention is an episode in the play of knowledge. Those of us that would carry logic into the sanctuaries of faith should not neglect to pronounce against the prostitution of science to the battle-field. Science needs to be tempered with humanity as much as religion. Put to its human use, the scientific method has its fruits in the spiritual and cultural spheres as in social and economic spheres. Human life is an organic unity of which these are more verbal, phasal abstractions. Just as the costly, rich-adorned coat does not by itself make the complete dress, so, a lopsided mental attitude does not stand for complete life. Great men see this and they make up the heart of the Virat Purusha (the masses). They do not stand apart from them, but are their very strength, their very life-blood. They see life in its totality, and not in narrow compartments. Just as the geological understanding of the earth by itself does not yield the comprehensive knowledge derivable through astronomy, biology, and a host of other sciences, even so the spiritual, cultural, sociological and economic regeneration of the world are interdependent, and each in itself does not count for real life. It is said that the enlightened leisured gentleman of any age stands for the index-symbol of its civilisation. If the level of thought and fellow-feeling attained by him may be traced comparatively in different

ages, the reading of the history of human advance will have been recorded.

It is the reproach of experimental philosophy that at its best it affords no more than intellectual satisfaction. It is not the true standard of progress. Life is an organic unity where the heart functions along with the head. Emphasis upon the heart ought not to paralyse the head. No life is full, no emancipation worth trying for that falls short of intellectual discrimination. We may afford to dissent from tradition, dogma and belief, but non-conformity with reason would be anomalous. True science frees itself from terrestrial-mindedness. The formulation of its laws ought not to come into conflict with ultra-terrestrial experience so far as it may demonstrably be had. Neither a shortsighted science restricted in its experiments to phenomena on the earth, in a brief period, nor long-sighted philosophy that overlooks life at the present as of little consequence in its universal comprehension, supplies the true lens needed for obtaining the correct perspective of human existence in all its bearings. By the recognition of the unity of metaphysics and physics we provide the basis for a natural religion rid of equivocation, conflicts, and mutually destructive tendencies. Into the possibilities of a unified world-religion, the masses (Virat Purusha Himself) are at present engaged in exploring. The international anthem is yet to sing veneration and service of the race into our ears.

Particles of matter floating distractedly throughout the universe evince signs of adjustment and organisation. They obey calculable laws of motion and interaction. Need human life be less organised, less obliged to calculable principles?

The community of astronomical spheres is not devoid of the kind of particles that enter into the composition of the human brain. The rebel-spirit of man is derived from the self-same particles that unite and revolve in orbital rounds. There is no warrant for the thought that man is a unique product, or that the earth which he inhabits is anything specially made for him. It is too terrestrial a view to take of the celestial drama, to so confine life, and our knowledge of it. Human consciousness accompanying the modifications by oxidisation of the cell-substance of the brain may appear to us singularly unique. There is no reason to suppose that such modifications of physical matters are possible only here and in the age of man. The speck of a planet and the tick of the astronomer's clock are nothing in cosmology. To know where we are, what our fancied worth in the stream of life, lifts the burden off the shoulders of our over-stressed importance. The intimations on comparitivism, therefore signify an elevation beyond measure.

If physical brain-particles can possibly exist outside the live brain, and chemical processes take place outside organic

bodies as well as within their skulls, there is no difficulty by extending the analogy of the Great Being (humanity) of positting a relative consciousness to it. In that all-comprehensive consciousness is the root of all love. Nature red in tooth and claw is the product of its genius.

Man who sees the horror of it is alike a product. Shall the drama of human life be played in vain? No, nature will have to be left better, nobler for and on account of the introduction of the species "Homo sapiens." Except when forced to accept the failure of human life on the planet may we not concede that wars, famines and pestilences deter man from leaving this earth fuller, richer and more healthy for his sojourn here. The art of living is greater than any of these negative forces. They, the masses (Virat Purusha) knew the art of living well. In the words of somebody 'they are not earnest workers.' "They have not the slightest idea that they were put upon earth to reform the earth. They are just happy." To be happy through understanding is the highest boon that comparative religion, philosophy and science may confer.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

THE GOSPEL OF REASON.

The Gospel of Reason is pledged to no creed, to no set dogmas, but accepts the supremacy of reason and makes this supremacy effectual in the affairs of every day life. In short, this is the end of all and the be of all Rationalism. Reason means the faculty of drawing conclusions and forming judgments. While faith is likely to accept all sorts of absurdities,

by patient research reason leads to truth. Is it impossible to be rational in every thing? Rationalism in all things means the pursuit of means to attain the agreeable. In this respect it comes very close to pragmatism. Amidst all the varying and jarring religions and creeds reason tends to promote unity of opinion. Reason is universal and brings to a common plat-

form people of all religions and views. The guiding principle of life ought to be reason, which is essentially constructive and does not disintegrate but binds. "Knowledge is power," and the rationality of man leads him to it.

Life is a jazz affair for many. In ancient Greece Socrates tried to make people think. Individuals and societies are not lacking who are always making attempts to go to the bottom of the well where truth lies hidden. In this way thousands of men and women scattered throughout the world of many nationalities, and of varied social position, and economic circumstance, may be bound together in their hunger and thirst for truth.

In the word of the poet it may be well said:—

"Look backward, how much has been won;

Look round, how much is yet to be won."

The highest resolve and the keenest study are needed. But "when was ever honey made with one bee in a hive."

A collective impulse of the love for truth is required. Einstein says, "Human beings seem to learn more slowly than insects." No wonder consciousness for truth dawns slowly and with difficulty.

Ch. ABDUL GHANI.

A SIGNIFICANT-CONFESSION.

A correspondent has drawn our attention to the following passage published in a local Roman Catholic weekly in its issue of the 4th February last:

"A local contemporary publishes a letter in which we read:"

"I presume therefore that he (a Catholic writer) would be glad to see in the Catholic Church, a detective department, a C. I. D. business, to detect heresies, scourge and torture, and even burn people. A fine outlook for the India that is going to be Catholic."

"It is a mistake to publish such charges in a Catholic paper without refutation. We say therefore emphatically that there is no possibility whatsoever of the Catholic Church ever employing medieval tortures and punishments in India or anywhere else. Official Protestant history makes the Catholic Church exclusively respon-

sible for such horrors in the past, but that is a lie. Protestants were just as bad and with less excuse. In any case Catholics today realize only too well what harm the Church has suffered from at all participating in these things. We believe that in the matter of tolerance the world really has made progress, although it is also that much which now passes for tolerance is really indifference. Let there be no mistake, however, Catholics are as convinced as anyone else that prison, torture and execution are no remedy for religious error."

The above admission in a Catholic publication is certainly interesting considering that many authoritative Catholic writers, with very few exceptions, have always justified the Church and excused its abominable policy of resorting to force and violence to spread its sway over mankind. Such an admission must have

greatly astonished the dull readers of that religious weekly. We know that for centuries, in fact from the beginning of its career, as soon as it became powerful enough to do so, the Church of Rome indulged in the pleasant pastime of persecuting, imprisoning, torturing and exterminating people to compel belief in its creed. Its policy, as expounded by many Catholic writers, was to ruthlessly destroy heretics and infidels as they were considered to be more dangerous to the State and the Church than the most deadly diseases. By the way, it is important to note that the savage persecution of the Jews by Christians began with this diabolical idea that all who were not Catholics were not fit to live in this world unless they became Catholics. These Catholic apologists called this policy a biological necessity—a natural act of self preservation—to extinguish, "*par le fer et le feu*" all who opposed or were suspected of opposing the teaching of that Church. The knowledge that the Church of Rome had other more forcible arguments than persuasion, kindness, shining example, saintliness, divine assistance and all that to spread the Faith should come as a great shock to those thousands of simpletons in this country who fondly imagine, as they have been taught in missionary schools and colleges, that Catholicism spread in a miraculous manner from the beginning of its career although it met with bitter persecutions. It is a question whether one must excuse them for not knowing the truth about the history of their Church or blame them for not trying to know anything about it except what their priests chose to teach them. It is a remarkable thing how densely ignorant the average Catholic is of the history of his Church! We are not referring to the uninstructed who have

had no opportunity of knowing these things. We refer to the so-called educated who have had their education in Catholic schools and colleges, and who strut about as University graduates with the consciousness that they are terribly well-educated people. It is these people who will be shocked to learn that intolerance, persecution, torture and execution were the methods on which for centuries the church relied to maintain its supremacy and to silence opinions that contradicted its own. We have often remarked that even on such a well known subject as the Infamous Inquisition which lasted for nearly 700 years and caused the destruction of millions of innocent people and the confiscation of their properties, etc., many Catholics seem to think this to be an invention of the "enemies of the Church" and consequently the wisest thing for them to do as "exemplary Catholics" should do, is not to lend a hearing to such wild talk, meant to disparage their Holy Mother the Church. Yet, here is a Catholic paper not only telling them that such things have happened, but further that "Catholics are as convinced as any one else that prison, torture and execution are no remedy for religious error." It is true, then, that once upon a time the Popes, who were enlightened by the Holy Ghost, erroneously believed that the remedy was excellent. We accept this as the individual opinion of the writer of that paper and not the conviction of weighty Catholic authorities who still maintain that the Church was not only right in adopting that horrible policy, but should do it again if ever it gets the chance to do so as the remedy is excellent. To express such an opinion for the benefit of his ignorant readers does more credit to the heart of the writer of that

Weekly than to his head. He should know that his Church has never repented for this atrocious crime against mankind and civilization, and even now there are authoritative apologists who fully justify this policy. The following taken from Mr. H. Belloc's History of England (concerning the burning and execution of Queen Mary) shows that even a lay writer like Mr. Belloc tries to justify the Catholic Church by showing that the Protestants were as cruel and that this savage and intolerant disposition was due to the time these people lived:—"It is not historically true to say that this effort at repressing the religious and political revolt changed the mind of England through pity for the victims. There is no evidence of strong or universal feeling of that kind nor is it in the nature of things that there should have been such a feeling, for though the persecution was exceptional in degree, it was not exceptional in kind. Men were quite used to the idea and the spectacle of burning and remained used to it for a good hundred years." That is to say, men behaved like savage beasts when they were more religious than people now. It is quite true that the Protestants were as cruel and intolerant as the Catholics, but it is no excuse to say that these people lived during a time when religious fanaticism made them so and that they considered it quite a natural thing to do. Christianity, which was believed to be a religion of peace and goodwill among mankind, brought hatred, fire and sword in its train. This diabolical attitude of people on religious questions would have never changed but for the civilising and humanising influence of rationalism which enabled the more sensible and enlightened to see the folly and pretensions of these creeds and the

havoc they have played with humanity and civilization.

It is all very well for a Bombay Catholic Weekly to assure its readers that Catholics now recognize the error of persecution and repression. Such does not appear to be the case with many religious authorities who still use all the casuistry they are capable of to justify and explain the reason of such a barbarous policy. The law of the Church—The Canon Law—as it is called enacts that heretics should be put to death. Only thirty two years ago (1901) a compendium of the Canon Law was written by a Jesuit Father who was a professor of the Papal University at Rome. He was Father Marianus de Luca who in his "*Institutiones Juris Ecclesiastici Publici*" issued from the Vatican press tells us. "When the inviolable right of any society begins to be assailed and denied, we have then above all to assert and vindicate it. Now, if ever this was done it is especially in our age that we see the right of inflicting upon the guilty whatever penalties be necessary, however severe, particularly what is called 'the right of the sword' denied to the perfect society, and the death-sentence buried among dead laws.....Against these Regalists and their modern followers we affirm that the Church has a coercive power even to the extent of the death sentence. We start with the vindication of this right for the Church, both on account of opponents who loudly accuse our mother the Church of unjust and wicked action in sentencing heretics to death, especially of putting to death certain leaders of heresy and apostates, and because from the right to inflict capital punishment we easily deduce the right to inflict lesser penalties." (Vol. 1 page 142).

"The death sentence is a necessary and efficacious means for the Church to attain its end when rebels against it and disturbers of the ecclesiastical unity, especially heretics and heresiarchs, cannot be restrained by any other penalty from continuing to derange the ecclesiastical order and impelling others to all sorts of crime particularly ecclesiastical crime. When the perversity of one or several is calculated to bring about the ruin of many of its children it is bound effectively to remove it, in such wise that if there be no other remedy for saving its people it can and must put these wicked men to death." (Vol. 1 p. 143. Translated by Mr. J McCabe and published in his "The Truth about the Catholic Church.") Very practical and cool indeed on the part of Father Marianus de Luca ! Pope Leo XIII in a letter congratulated him for expressing such a savage opinion and we must take it that this is the official view of the Church of Rome on the question. If this Church still had the power, the present writer, all the members of the Rationalist Association of India and every Rationalist in Catholic countries would be put to death by these fiends who arrogate to themselves the sole right of preaching the truth to mankind. Sir Alexander G. Cardew in the Rationalist Annual 1933 gives us the views of a few more Catholic authorities on the subject of Toleration and on the right of the Catholic Church to inflict the death penalty on unbelievers. These views are published in the Catholic Encyclopedia, (an authoritative publication) and are written by learned ecclesiastics. For instance, the Revd Dr. Fohle in the article on "Toleration" explains that what is called "Theoretical dogmatic toleration" is an erroneous attitude as it can only be the outcome of indifference towards truth and in fact amounts to a countenancing of error. Hence he concludes that such toleration is quite

indispensible, and that its opposite—namely theoretical dogmatic *intolerance*—notably cannot be considered not only to be wrong but is in fact "among the self-evident duties of every man who recognises ethical obligations" and "is a prominent characteristic of the Catholic Church." Needless to say that Dr. Pohle regrets that the Church has lost this power and longs for the day when it will be possible for it to apply it with full vigour.

Sir Alexander G. Cardew gives us the views of other writers in the Catholic Encyclopedia who express the same opinion and wishes. There is, for instance, the Revd. Dr. Wilhem. He justifies the Church thoroughly and claims that it is its duty to exterminate those who oppose it. Another writer is the Revd. J. Blotzer who takes the same view and calls it a kind of iron law ; yet another writer is the Rev James Bridge S. J. who does not think that the Church can be accused of persecution even when it uses rack, axe or faggot to compel belief ! If educated and civilized clergymen can express such barbarous feelings in the 20th century one can understand the feelings of exultation of such a fiend as a Torquemada or Calvin when he tortured his victims in the name of religion. These fanatics had not the slightest compunction when they exterminated the Albigenses, the Lowlanders and the unfortunate victims of the St. Bartholomew day to name only a few outrages of the Catholics on humanity. It is such a religion that its followers claim was spread miraculously. Miraculous indeed ! by the help of fire and sword and other instruments of torture to repress unbelief and to make honest thought and doubt a crime punishable by death. A divine religion indeed !

C. L. D'AVOINE.

CHALLENGING GOD.

DOES a man who has "whole-heartedly" believed in religion at an early period of his life—particularly a religion such as Christianity, in which the element of fear plays so large a part—ever completely shake off its influence? I am convinced that complete liberation seldom occurs. Such a man may perceive the complete intellectual worthlessness of religion; he may have a full knowledge of the origin of religion in helplessness and ignorance, and be quite convinced that no other basis for it exists or can exist. But in the deeper currents of feeling, in the manifestation of predominantly emotional states, he will be found yielding an unconscious recognition to the power of his early fears. To use a very hackneyed but useful phrase, he does not believe in religion, but he is afraid of it. And in such cases what is manifested is not the fear that one may have in facing an overwhelmingly superior physical force, but the fear of too greatly outraging a long established taboo.

I am trying to express the psychological analogue of what takes place in the sphere of physical disease. There are diseases which a person may acquire in early years, and from which he may, as it is said, effect an apparently complete recovery. But the recovery is only partial. Some modification of structure, of functional attitude has been effected, and, in relation to that or to some other or later disease, the organic balance has been altered. On a psycho-physiological level we had the discovery made during the war that the vast majority of cases of so-called shell-shock were due to early

experiences and not to the war. The war was only the occasion for an expression of the injury received years before.

The "Old Old Story."

Looking over a mass of Bradlaugh literature I have been struck with the seriousness with which even such a character as the great Iconoclast took the famous "Watch story." It was said that at some lecture or meeting Bradlaugh pulled out his watch and dared God to prove his existence by striking him dead in three minutes. For years Bradlaugh tracked down this story, accurately described those who told it as liars and slanderers, demanded apologies, and threatened and instituted legal actions to protect his character against this "defamation." This resentment was not expressed against the implied slander on his intelligence, but against an attack on his character. The Christian liar said to his hearers, "I will show you the kind of person we have to deal with by" etc., etc. The Atheist said, in effect, "I am not that kind of person. I do not challenge the deity to demonstrate his existence by striking me dead. I say I have no belief in his existence, and am willing at any time to put forward reasons for my disbelief. But I will not affront religious feeling by challenging God to prove his existence in that way." In the result the denial did not prevent the ordinary Christian liar repeating the lie, but it did help to strengthen the religious belief that whether one is praising or criticizing a deity one must approach him, or it, with a degree of caution that one need exhibit towards other subjects.

The Appeal to God.

Now, in substance, the watch story is as old as religion, and is embedded and expressed in all genuine religion to-day. *And it was the religionist who began it.* Early religion is a mass of organized fear. As nothing can come without the co-operation of the gods their action is seen in both good and evil. Driven to desperation by hard strokes of fate here and there a desperate man may have defied the gods to "do their damndest," and take the consequences. And religionists have always asserted that when ill happened to man it was either due to God's desire to "try him," or to God's intention to punish him for his ill-deeds. Quite obviously, if there is a God, and if he does anything at all, his providence must be exhibited in this world and in relation to man. People do pray to God for a safe journey or for recovery from illness; and they do think that an escape from a railway disaster or from an earthquake is something for which to thank God. Common expressions, apart from formal expressions of belief in sermons and confessions of faith, all move on the lines of the watch-story. What else is the significance of such phrases as "I wonder God does not strike him dead," or "It is God's judgment on him."

The appeal to God is also seen in trial by ordeal. The innocence or guilt of men and women was for ages decided by their walking over red-hot bars, or swearing on holy relics, or by other tests, all of which implied the direct action of deity. It is seen in the New Testament where Jesus promised his followers that "in my name" they should drink deadly things unharmed. It is in the old Bible in the challenge of Elijah to the prophets of

Baal, and in the story of the children who were devoured by bears because they mocked the prophet of God. It is with us to-day in the legal oath, and in the belief of some stupid coroners and magistrates that a man who does not believe in God cannot be trusted to speak the truth. One of Bradlaugh's greatest fights was against this particular superstition.

It was thus the religious world which set the example of challenging God to do things. Believers began to grow angry when unbelievers took them at their word and decided to test the question. This is not the only case in which a thing is either criminal or praiseworthy as it is used for an established belief or against it.

Why Not ?

In all seriousness why should not an Atheist ask the Christian for a decisive test as to his belief? The Christian is fond of arguing that experience—individual experience—is the real test of Christianity. Christian literature is full of stories in which God has blessed men believing in him, and punished others for disobeying him. These vary from the boy who was drowned because he played games on Sunday, to the Bishop of London who believed that the allies won the war because they were fighting on God's side. In another direction Professor Tyndall offered to equip a ward in a hospital with the newest scientific appliances, and test it against another ward which used only the power of prayer. Why then should not an Atheist test the power of God with a watch and three minutes? It is to be noted that the Atheist takes all the risks; he does not ask God to show that he exists by killing his own followers, although there are more religious people than there are

Atheists, and they could on the whole be better spared. The Christian is asked to risk nothing—except the substantiality of his belief.

Why, then, should not the Atheist challenge God to this test if he is so inclined? On the face of it there is no more in it than in an Atheist who is ill saying to a Christian, "You say that I can only be cured by the grace of God. I do not believe it, and therefore in declining I am challenging him to do what he likes." It is no more than John Stuart Mill did in his famous statement that if God would send him to hell for not believing certain things "Then to hell I will go." I agree that the Atheist is taking no great risk; it is something like a man challenging the Matterhorn to fall on him because he does not believe in the historicity of William Tell. As a test of Christian belief the watch test is as good as any that has been placed before the public, and quite as legitimate.

The Atheist cannot argue that religious questions ought to be treated with greater "reverence" than others. Surely it is part of our case against the common law of blasphemy that religion should be treated exactly as are other subjects. Had Bradlaugh agreed to treat religion as a subject apart he would never have had much of the trouble he experienced. Ought we to adapt our speech to the feeling of Christian whenever we are speaking on religion? That may be a good "safety first" device, and there are occasions when it is useless or suicidal to act otherwise. But it is surely part of our case that no Christian is justified in feeling hurt because an Atheist ridicules something which is to him ridiculous, or denounces something which seems to him bad. Rules of public

order and decency must always exist, but to claim special rules for religion is something that all Freethinkers should resist.

The Survival of the Primitive.

I see no other explanation of the phenomena we have been considering than the working of the primitive religious virus. I quite agree with those who say that this challenging of God is, under given circumstances, a poor display. It does not require courage for a man who is a convinced Atheist to challenge God to strike him dead. It does not require courage for a man to defy a God in whose belief he has no existence. It is impossible for his challenge to be either accepted or acted on. But I am not interested in the repudiation of a lie; it is the indignation with which such a charge is received that provides the interesting circumstance. And the way in which it is faced is a tacit admission that "reverence" ought to exist in some degree with all who handle religion whether they believe in it or not.

Fear of the Gods, the belief that the Gods are beings whom it is dangerous to offend is one of the oldest phases of human mentality. From the earliest times the gods have been credited with a peculiar *Mana* which it is dangerous to encounter. The names of the gods had to be uttered with great ceremony, and often at great risk to the user. Their service has been surrounded with great solemnity, and their altars could only be approached with profound respect. For thousands of generations this peculiar atmosphere has accompanied the belief in God; it is guarded by law and custom—the latter the harder of the two to break. The feeling thus developed are

amongst the deepest in our nature, and it is not displaced easily or quickly. The poison is there, and it can only be completely eliminated when mankind has made for itself an environment to which the idea of God is foreign. We all have tailed bodies, and to use an expression of Winwood Reade's, we have also tailed minds. Millions of people have to-day

outgrown, intellectually, the belief in a God, but the primitive fear still lingers, enforced by survivals in science and philosophy. The primitive is always with us, and it manifests its presence in a thousand and one ways.

CHAPMAN COHEN.
in "The Freethinker."

BIRTH CONTROL AND STERILIZATION.

Today sterilization—of both the male and the female—has come to occupy a new place in the activities of civilized man. It is no longer employed for wantonly sadistic or religious purposes, nor for the creation of a slave class. It is now being utilized chiefly for the improvement of the race and as a method of checking an undesired and undesirable increase of population.

Sterilization for the purpose of preventing reproduction is receiving a good deal of attention at the hands of modern scientists. All over the world there is an increasing use of the practice, which means an operation for the resection of the Fallopian tubes in the female and the tying of the vas deferens in the male. Criminologists and eugenists have both studied the subject as a device for the control of the criminal and the mentally defective. They are almost unanimously agreed that it is for the benefit of society as well as for the very protection of the defectives and the insane that these members of the race shall not continue to produce themselves.

Society's interest is evident from the number of laws that have been passed on the use of measures for sterilization of the criminally insane, the feeble-minded, etc. But the law at present forbids a physician to perform the operation on a patient who is in a normal state of health. As in the case of abortion, the law demands that there be definite medical indications of a threat to the parent's life in the event of pregnancy, before sterilization measures can be applied. If the patient has heart or kidney disease, or pulmonary complications (especially if the patient is of middle age and has already had several children), her condition is regarded as sufficient to justify the cutting of the Fallopian tubes. The law and medical men agree that it is more important to safeguard an already existing life and to conserve the mother of children already born than to be concerned with the birth of still another child.

Despite this apparent rule of common sense, there are large gaps in the rational scene. New York state, for example,

because of the dominant Catholic influence, has been a stumbling block to the eugenicist. In 1912 a statute was passed by the New York state legislature authorizing the sterilization of state inmates of hospitals for the insane and feeble-minded, for the rapist, and for confirmed criminals in prisons and reformatories. This provision was hedged around with securities against its abuse by requiring that a board consisting of a surgeon, a neurologist, and a physician examine the mental and physical condition of the subject with a view of determining from his life and the record of his family whether the sterilization was advisable. The statute was ultimately held to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Albany County on the ground that it was limited to those who were confined in state institutions, who were therefore denied the equal protection of the law. The statute was finally repealed; and because of the religious and sentimental misunderstandings involved, no other law has since been passed that would avoid the unconstitutional provision.

Sterilization has an advantage over all other contraceptive methods in that it is certain to be effective. All popular methods of contraception require a degree of preparation in order to make them effective. This is true whether the contraceptive device is a chemical or a mechanical one. On æsthetic and psychological grounds a good many people object to the use of preparatory measures to avoid conception. Among women especially, doctors find a high-strung sensitivity, so that if they are required to occupy themselves with the preparation of a contraceptive means, they will become indifferent. Many women (I have found in my years of practice) are willing to forego the pleasure of their sex life

because it is surrounded and hemmed in by precautionary details that are repugnant to them emotionally and psychologically. For such women, assuming of course that they are already the parents of several children and are certain not to desire any more, sterilization is the safest method and the one that is most helpful in the full realization of a happy life.

Every gynecologist has had occasion to observe a large number of patients who have been sterilized in the course of a major operation. These patients are under careful study; observation has been made of them not only from the standpoint of the altered physiologic functioning of their genital tract, but also as to their mental attitudes and their psychological responses to the normal stimuli of husbands, children, and the family relationships. The results have been most gratifying. Where there has been any difference at all, the change has been for a better, happier, saner life. Some women reacted as if they had received a new lease of life and had won a new and especially attractive freedom. Many adopted a happier attitude in their sex relationships. Because they no longer feared pregnancy they became, for possibly the first time, full and happy mates of their husbands.

Conventional moralists in their opposition to any form of birth regulation do not seem to realize the part that fear plays in the sexual relationships of most men and women. The presence of that fear robs the sex act of most of its joys. It frequently leads the woman to deny herself to her husband, who is led to seek sexual satisfaction outside the home! I have known women who will tolerate the adultery of their husbands rather than

incur for themselves the risk of another pregnancy. The demoralization subsequent to such an attitude and the encouragement it lends to the spread of venereal diseases are self-evident.

Sterilization, when it becomes more popular, will go far to decrease the number of abortions that take place. If a physician were given the right to sterilize a woman who asks for it after she has had several children, the larger percentage of criminal abortions would immediately become unnecessary.

But there are at present the same restrictive laws against sterilization as against abortion. How unjust and remote from real needs these may be is indicated by the following examples :

There was a young couple, who had been married for five years and were the parents of one child. The husband, a young university teacher of twenty-eight, had heart disease and suffered occasional periods of decompensation. Both he and his wife were aware that his life span was sure to be short. After the birth of their first child, the woman went to several birth control clinics and tried a number of mechanical and chemical devices to prevent further pregnancies; nevertheless she became pregnant six times. *They decided therefore to have one or the other sterilised, until they were told by a physician that the law tied his hands.* She could not be sterilized because she was not sick; he could not be sterilized because, sick though he was, his life was not imperiled by the pregnancies (and abortions) that she endured.

Another case was that of a woman of thirty, who gave birth to two children, both of whom were born deaf mutes. She consulted a number of neurologists as to the probabilities of her giving birth to a

normal child, but none of them was willing to give her positive assurances on that score. The woman was desperate; she was determined to have no more children, yet she could not use the contraceptive devices. She asked to be sterilized but her physician had to tell her the sad truth that he was forbidden by the laws of the state to relieve her fears by sterilization.

These cases indicate the need for a liberal law on sterilization. The practice must not be restricted only to the limitation of defective offspring of defective parents. There is no reason why the benefits of scientific discovery should not be extended to relieve the ills of normal mankind.

Sterilization can become a tremendous instrument for happiness. As in abortion, the state can make intelligent use of it and surround the act with safeguards and restrictions against abuse. Its extended use will relieve women of their insufferable burdens in more ways than one. Today the burden of childbearing and birth control is largely a feminine concern. It is the woman who has to make sure of her contraceptive security. When it fails it is the woman who submits to the abortion or undergoes the *physical hardships of an unwanted pregnancy.* The legalization of sterilization will serve to distribute the responsibility in a larger measure than we have today. Because the male can be sterilized as well as the female, and by a simpler procedure, his will be the task of taking precaution against unwanted children.

As a background to this proposed liberalization, it is, of course, necessary to have the human need imprint itself on public opinion and through that on the legislators. Suffering is often too abstract

to have an effect upon the direct activities of those not themselves touched by it. However, if our public leaders were to look into the thousands of case histories, the many of thousands of tragedies, and imagine the even vaster extent of unrecorded suffering, something of an ameliorative nature might result on our statute books.

When it does, it will include measures for population control by contraception, by state-sanctioned abortions, and by the sterilization of those who have already made some healthy contribution to the increase of population.

During the past twenty years the question of sterilization has become a real problem to the gynecologist. The modern woman no longer permits the injuries resulting from childbirth to continue indefinitely. In general she has them repaired when she has definitely decided to bear no more children, as it would be useless to undergo a plastic operation on the vaginal vault, which would be undone by subsequent child births. Now, the average intelligent woman, who has given birth to two, three, or more children, requests to be sterilized when she has the genital tract repaired, so that future pregnancies will be impossible. The question arises: What should be the attitude of the gynecologist in these cases? Should he assent to the wish of the patient, or should he be the sole arbiter in each case?

Frankly, I believe that any married couple has the right to decide as to the number of children they should have, particularly if the woman has given birth

to two or more children. It is the right of a married couple to decide whether they are in a position, economically or otherwise, to raise a large number of children.

But somehow this point of view is not entirely accepted either by society, state, or even the medical profession. There are many physicians who still believe in the *laissez faire* policy. There are many who refuse to perform a sterilization operation at any time and instead continue to subject their patients to numerous caesarean sections. Now, every experienced obstetrician knows that the danger of caesarean section operations increases in direct proportion to the number of times it is performed on the patient. It would seem logical for the obstetrician to assume that the patient is within her full right to demand that she be sterilized after she has had two or three caesarean sections. Nevertheless, he often refuses to do so and thereby exposes the patient to the alternative of additional pregnancies or criminal abortions.

The time is rapidly approaching when our attitude to the entire problem of birth regulation must undergo tremendous changes. Sooner or later we will have to realize that indiscriminate propagation of the human race does not accrue to the best interests of society. We must think in terms of quality instead of quantity when we discuss and deal with problems relating to reproduction.

A. J. RONGY, M. D.

The Birth Control Review.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

God's Good Men.

In estimating the character of individuals, every pious man attempts to measure it with the criterion of the fear of God. To the bulk of religious minded people the fear of God is the only corrective in life and the sole reason why they follow in the right path. A man is considered God-fearing when he performs certain actions in public. He should attend the place of worship, say his prayers regularly, insist on his children learning at the hands of his priests and above all be a good friend of the priests. Needless to say such a man will also observe such commandments like fasting and growing one's beard most religiously. This god-fearing attitude gives one a certain premium in most of the societies, and the more ignorant the group, the greater the respect one gets and greater the license that is given to one. Naturally men and women are not wanting who make the best of this. Men in the public eye who are desirous of getting on generally pretend to be god-fearing as otherwise they are boycotted by their clientele. They carefully maintain this public attitude though they confess to their best friends that God and his books mean nothing to them. However, though this attitude is not worthy of decent people it is on the whole not so depraving as it causes harm to no one, except the cause of rationalism. It only bespeaks cowardice. There are god-fearing people however, who go a step further. They are by nature crooks and use this pose to camouflage their real personality. In business circles they will cast their net amongst the ignorant, for to them, a god-fearing man is always trust-worthy. Once or twice a year, in every little town,

we hear that so and so, a god-fearing man has filed a schedule for insolvency or been incriminated in a criminal breach of trust case. On further investigation one learns that it is the ignorant people and helpless widows and priests, who mistrusting the satanic world, had invested their all with this holyman. The usual excuse is "Oh yes, but this is not due to his religion; it is because he is a crook that he has misused religion." Quite so; but it points out to what an extent exemplary religious practice can be divorced from a straight life where the precept is love thy neighbour as thyself and secondly how misleading is this test of god's fear. The common man has to revise his standards, and the fear of god as the motive for the above kind of life must be discarded. I primarily object to this Pauline policy of living in fear. Love ought to be the guiding star. Fear develops a sense of defeat and a loss of confidence; love a sense of exaltation and joy which makes life pleasant.

* * *

God above All.

Man has taught himself that God has a prior claim on him. Logically, perhaps, from a human standpoint since He is believed to be the origin of everything. But even with the very same standards you find that gods are on the wrong side of being considerate. Last week I met an old gentleman past the sixties. His life has been a tale of woe. Though once well-off, he lost all his money some years back. Though blessed with many children he lost several of them when they showed promise. For some years he has been unemployed. The whole family is supported by his

eldest daughter. Now this daughter has decided to dedicate herself to God and save her "soul." The poor man is stranded. God's call has come for his new bride. This, I consider, is certainly not playing the game. The main consideration for the young lady is the saving of her soul; for God, it is the complete offering on the part of the creature. Between the two, the former is more reasonable; for God, who is infinitely happy, a little less praise would not make any difference. When he is convinced of the affection of his creatures, would it not be more kindly on his part to offer these special devotees extra protection against temptation in this world, either by detailing two more guardian angels or warning the devil off the track? This would give them facilities to remain with their parents, support them and the same time be assured of saving their souls. But this he does not do perhaps, because he loves them more, and the more you love the greater the desire for monopoly and possession. Talking rational things to these youngsters, who are generally in their teens, is no use. The exaltation of their inner voice hypnotises their critical faculties. Their one answer is that if God can look after the lilies in the field and the birds in the trees won't he look after one's parents and one's helpless brothers and

sisters! And then a smile. You can't blame them either. This is the age when Bernadetta sees the Virgin. The blame should be laid at the door of the religious instructors, who, though they have outlived their hypnotic state yet make no attempt to break the spell over these children in their teens and show them the world around. This they will not do, for it will lay bare God's indifference to human suffering and human entreaty.

* * *

The Fast Again.

By the time this appears in print Mr. Gandhi will have begun his fast. Last time we condemned his action though there was wide sympathy for him. But today, as predicted before, the tide of sympathy is fast ebbing and all opinions are unanimous in not supporting him in the stunt he has started again. Some go further and condemn the action on moral grounds. With all due respect for the man, one must admit that these fasts are a trifle overdone. Entreaties are of no use because it is the inner voice that is speaking. We must thank the sun and the moon that no other leader of India is led by his inner voice. The only person that is so guided is His Holiness the Pope and we all know the predicament he sometimes falls into.

ALI AKBAR.

The annual report and the report of the annual meeting will be published in the next issue.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS.

The Bombay news-papers recently reported an interesting case of a rogue, in the disguise of a Hindu priest, cruelly deceiving ignorant villagers in Central India by threatening them with the "Wrath of God" in the shape of death and diseases to themselves and their

cattle unless a substantial sum of money was paid to him and his associates to appease that wrath by sacrifices and ceremonies.

The story goes that the "Sadhu" used to arrive in state accompanied by his followers and solemnly tell the ignorant

villagers that angry Gods had chosen their village for venting their wrath, and unless they were propitiated, pestilence would sweep the village. The trembling peasants would listen with credulous awe and reverence and when he finished would ask him, "what do you want us to do"? "The Sadhu would answer: "I have come here just for that purpose. I have been charged with the mission of rescuing you from the gods' wrath." But to save them from extermination he would have to make a sacrificial offerings to the gods, for which purpose he would require a large sum of money. He demanded rupees five hundred for the purpose, but the poor people hesitated as they had not enough of money to make up that sum. The "Sadhu" became enraged and delivered himself thus: "From tomorrow morning your cattle shall die and if the gods are not propitiated before sunset, then the men, women, and children also shall perish."

The owe-stricken villagers left his presence brooding over the fate in store for them. Sure enough, on the following morning, they were aghast to find the street strewn with the corpses of their best cattle. Without further thought, they ran to the "Sadhus" camp, fell prostrate before him and implored him to save them further havoc. They pooled their savings, raised Rs. 500 and offered it to the Sadhu.

* * *

Once in a possession of the money, the holy man lit up a sacrificial fire, and, assisted by his men, with great pomp and ceremony performed the *homa*, the villagers standing around and watching the proceedings with hope and fear. At the conclusion of the ceremony the "Sadhu" and his party blessed the villagers and assured them that

nothing further would happen to them, and left the village in triumphal procession. A couple of days later similar events happened in another village in the same district. Here, too, the Sadhu made the same threat and demanded money, and on the refusal of the villagers to comply with his request their cattle was found dead. It so happened that a villager from the first village had also come to the place. He related what had happened in his village and the villagers becoming suspicious started a huge commotion against the Sadhu and his associates. They were arrested and searched and three pounds of Arsenic with which they worked the "Wrath of God" were found in their possession. They are now awaiting prosecution in an upcountry court.

* * *

It is not only "Sadhus" pseudo—or genuine who trade on the "Wrath of God". Let any calamity happen in any place and immediately the priests of the locality will make the hairs of people stand with the talk of the anger of God. They know exactly how it has been caused and how to avert it. People must rally round the priests who will pray to appease that wrath. In order that this may be done properly money must flow into the coffers of the Church. Priests depend much on public calamities to create interest in themselves and in the religion that they preach.

* * *

Before Science had enlightened people on the causes of natural phenomena the Churches in Christendom benefitted a good deal by the ignorance of the people. Just as here, in India, ignorant people are still alarmed at the appearance of an eclipse, there in the West, such an occurrence as a comet or a total eclipse of the

sun would drive people mad with fear and priests would exploit that fear. When Halley's comet appeared two hundred years ago, the Pope issued a Bull against the comet and ordered prayers to be said in all the Churches. Bells were rung to scare the comet away and when it did disappear thanksgiving services were held all over.

* * *

The present writer remembers many religious ceremonies in Bombay performed to allay the plague epidemic which began in 1897. In Mazagon, which was then a filthy place full of foul cesspools, dirty drains and miserable hovels, solemn processions were held in honour of St. Roque who is believed by Catholics to be influential against the plague. The plague in Mazagon did not disappear until the cesspools were filled up, the place properly drained and the miserable hovels demolished. Even the Church had to disappear to make room for the sanitary measures which were undertaken to free Bombay of that serious epidemic.

* * *

The Nazis are playing havoc in Germany. They are destroying everything

which they believe stand in their way. Besides the political parties of which they are in fear they have attacked all the Freethinkers Associations of Germany and the works of many philosophers and scientists have been burnt in the public places as they used to do in the Middle Ages. These "Barbarians of the North" seem to have found out that education is the enemy of Tyranny, and Freedom of Thought the friend of Liberty and by ruthlessly destroying both they hope to throw the world again into the Dark Ages. It is a strange fact that all these Nordic races seem to have an instinctive fear of knowledge and Free Thought. In England, the tendency is towards religious reaction and interference with the liberty of individuals. In America, the Nordic people are especially active in the same direction. As is well known, in many States, the teaching of Science is viewed with great suspicion, if not actually prevented as in Tennessee. All this seems to indicate that the progress of knowledge and culture may receive a severe check as was the case in former ages.

THE GODS GATHER

"Scientific inventions and other discoveries have given a rude shock to religion" says Sir Govindrao Pradhan, Chairman, Reception Committee, Nasik, in his address (p. 8) to the All Faiths Conference which was held to prove "that religion is not a waning force but it still holds the field for knitting together men and nations." History proves that this process of **knitting together** had been a very painful operation and

withal, a very unsuccessful one. Nor was the chairman unaware of it. "Often-times, in history, fiercest wars, and worst persecutions have been due to religion." (p. 7) What better evidence may be had to prove the human origins of the faiths of the world, as opposed to the claim "to a divine revelation communicated to the great sages of old." "But, all religions" proceeds Sir Govindarao Pradhan "past or pre-

sent, are the fruits of growth, so to say, they are evolved, having their roots in the past, not by sudden leaps and bounds, but by "a steady growth." Reflect awhile on the implications of this admission of growth, roots in the past, 'not by sudden leaps and bounds'. It is the natural history of religion and an effective denial of supernatural creation. When the evolution in religious doctrine is adequately examined, the 'foundations of theism' will have been discovered far from having been 'impregnable.' The reasons for man's faith in immortality are traceable to so slender a basis as the pious wish for an adjustment of terrestrial accounts in the currency of happiness in an after-life. When 'the basic ideas of almost every religion' (viz. the belief in God and personal Immortality) are satisfactorily accounted for, by the 'materialistic philosophy of the Universe', it is obvious that speculations about their reality are rendered unnecessary. Evolution is unfolding the unity and continuity of the material universe and mental life experienced therein. In the year of the Christians Lord, 1933, "it is needless to seek" to unite and strengthen the forces which are adverse to a materialistic philosophy of the universe whatever may have been the utility of such a course for the world's fair at Chicago, in 1893. Matter is much more alive now than what it was forty years ago. Following up his own thesis of growth and evolution of religious systems, having their roots in the past, Sir Govindrao may do worse than utilise later knowledge and discovery concerning the atom, in "adopting" the wrinkled principles of (1893) Chicago, for guidance.

Crossing the threshold of reception, there is the usual helplessness pointing skyward to "the Almighty above," with which His Holiness Jagad-guru Shri Shankaracharya began the proceedings. We meet (in cheerfulness?) to see how far we can displace "the present atmosphere full of eternal struggle, where life is competing and fighting with life." His keen eye may have reached the conflict of life discernable under the microscope, and an unaided speculation may have pierced open the mystery of astronomical warfare. But whether in the field of the very little forms of life, in the bacillus, the disease germ, and the microbe, or in regard to huge stellar bodies, a little reflection on the implications of this 'eternal struggle' 'competition and fight' tends to shake the belief in a benign Omnipotence. It may occur that such a belief is not founded on a reasonable basis. Further, the transcendentalism involved in the phrase "Almighty Above" is hardly consistent with the philosophical position of the Vedanta school. The realisation of the Brahman within as propounded by its founder is a species of Immanence, sternly opposed to faith in the Personality Beyond. Nor may it be explained that His Holiness was expounding any system beside what he officially represents. His philosophical survey (pp. 10-14) points to no such breaking away from his native moorings. But a process of abstraction, the capacity to ignore the essentials of religious definition enabled the Jagadguru to treat, as on an equal footing, the varied ideals of theological doctrine and metaphysical speculation. The Higher Power, Universal Mind, An Over-Soul, God, The Supreme Universal Self, and even the Connecting Link 'which binds man

to his fellow-beings' these are all recieved on one platform. His Holiness makes no secret of this process of notional abstraction, for he relies "on the instinctive assumption of this principle of the unity of human nature" as forming the basis of "scientific activities, no less than the activities connected with the everyday life of man." (p.11). But, why restrict the principle to human nature? Why not comprehend the tiger, the lion, and the volcanic nature, in this instinctive assumption of unity in the activities connected with the everyday life of man?

Again, if this principle of unity is different from the result of the merely human activity of comparative imagination, and is thus to begin with a capital P (i.e. principle) it is permissible to ask, wherefrom came the "ignorance of the real nature of one's own self and the universe around"? What is that "source of self-centered life" and why "all the inevitable and unhappy incidents entailing upon it"? And why or how are they inevitable? Either ignorance, (Maya, illusion) is overpowering Omniscience, or Karma is overcoming Omnipotence. It is enfeebled horoscopy, anyway. The philosophical survey does not attempt to explain "the germinal condition" of human perfection which has merely "the possibilities of a wider and deeper consciousness" and as all possibilities are it also may not have. It is a confession of the human attempt to postulate the possibility of progress with a view to social advance to start with the presumption of initial imperfection. Even at that, it does no good to the race to teach that the "notion of separateness is false" on the authority of an extract unifying principle merely to be deduced from the facts of existence and of life.

His Holiness recognises the point when he speaks of "the non-empirical nature of the Higher Reality (p. 13) that has compelled the enquirer to make many more halts than there should have been." His Holiness may have the Platonic or the Aristotelian Reality in mind, or it may be an oriental one. Three thousand years of ardent enquiry did not help to bring the Higher Reality one inch further into the forefront of life or nearer to man. Is he not justified in crying "halt" before further approaches to Brahmin are promised to be explored by non-empirical methods? There was, no doubt, over-emphasis laid on blind faith. But can the Vedantin excuse himself on the ground that he had not been in some distant way at least, responsible therefore? It does not detract from the rationalist cause, if we admit that reason is limping. Its experience is no doubt partial and relative, but that is all what anybody may honestly claim. Reason such as we have it, such as man has developed, is the one instrument available at all. We protest that agnosticism, even nihilism, is not the same thing as stagnation. Exercise of reason is the only course of true life. With it we prune our concepts and cut away overgrowths, even the highest ones. Words like God and immortality are explained away on their own definitive basis. We know that no such being as God, the designing Personality, exists anywhere, above or below. We know that a man that died at eighty does not survive to enjoy a youthful life of 35 even to solace a great person like Conan Doyle (Cf. Literary Guide, London, June 1933, p. 110.) Reason distinguishes facts from fiction, prose from poetry, history from folklore.

The true response to the 'appeal to the higher sense of unity of life' can only

come from human reason. However great the capacity of man to err, his capacity to do right is greater. He corrects himself through reason. He sees in 'the tide sweeping over the world to-day, the tide of non-belief' the beneficent process of mental and moral evolution. The one true lesson from the volcanic eruption of the Great War of 1914-18' is apparent. Armed forces ranged on either side prayed to the same Christian God, each for its own victory. The God of the Christian Church was supposed to have blessed the contending parties. But help was found to have come from human alliance more than by divine ordination. The post-war spirit, was, if anything, decidedly more anti-religious. That explains the flutter in the dove-cotes of church denominations that first sought to ignore their differences to found an United Christian church, and when the *concordat* was not impressive, the idea of the league of all the faiths in the world, heathen as well as Christian, began to gain ground. The effort "to enlist the services of all faiths in the world to *preserve* faith in God" (p. 6) is a sorry confession that the latter is alarmingly on the wane.

Reason advises a more optimistic attitude than is roused by the religious alarm. Mankind is to day discovering that it has attained age, that it may do away with symbol of fatherhood that had kept it under subjection. The new enfranchisement is in sharp contrast from the old faiths that rarely took note of the facts of life, nor made for true progress. India too can no longer feel flattered by the notion of her 'spiritual motherhood of mankind', in her starving, naked condition. The discovery is made that her motherhood lay more in the direction of helping to build the material resources

of many a country in the world, to her own detriment. The day is long past when a supposed spirituality was pitted against the material well-being of the race. India is not unaware of the latest scientific discoveries that are leaving behind the discriminations and contrasts between spiritual and material conditions in the dark limbo of anachronisms of the past. Inter-religious crusades may yet think of "stimulating religious relief" but so long as "the essential unity behind all" is antagonistic to natural philosophy, which is another name for science, so long as religions rest on their cars of supernaturalism, so long will the way of progress remain far, far remote. "We are the servants of one God, worshipped under many names" says the Jagadguru. A moslem speaker said: 'Islam meant no more than renunciation, service and sacrifice to God.' Both are abstractions from the realities of their respective faiths, which are poles apart. Is that one God, white, black, or yellow? Has he a beard, or is he close-shaven? What are His attributes? An attributeless Personality is as unimaginable as an Impersonal Entity. Such words as super-personality, whatever their logical propriety, are not helpful to clarify the understanding, which is accustomed to associate the brain with any functioning mind.

The World Fellowship of Faiths beckoning from the New World is an intriguing phenomenon. The phase of human life that may fairly be denoted by 'scientific humanism' stands a chance of gaining ground when orthodoxies agree to drive the divisional barriers underground. The light of modernism is fast entering the Brahmin Peeths and the Mutts in India, no less than it has

already entered the portals of Cathedrals and Churches elsewhere. The Jagad-guru of Panchavati is in the same inconvenient position that biblical criticism and modern science have created for Dean Inge of St. Paul, and Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham. Would that all religious organisations were manned with individuals acquainted with the latest trends of religious thought, and theological movement to do as much as rationalise their creeds. For, in a sense, an all-faiths conference is the 'watering down' of faith in the exclusive merit of one particular religion. But the process should continue to dilute yet further the fundamental concepts of God and Immortality which were the primitive scaffolding. Man has learnt to scan the abode of the gods, and the grizzly faces. It is time he made the highest sacrifice, the renunciation of the dwarfed divinities on the altar of true knowledge. Will America help the performance of this Yagna, the fire-offering of the gods of the world?

That is a matter for reasonable doubt. American evolution has been so far a halting witness. Despite the 4 A (American Association for the Advancement of Atheism) and occasional news trickling down across the seas helpful to rationalist cause, recent history in some States has not been enlightening.

The school master of Dayton, Tennessee was punished for no offence other than teaching evolution to his pupils. Fundamental States have since prohibited, by laws specially framed, the teaching of the natural law. The anxiety to re-instate the Bible as the book-of-all knowledge is keener nowhere else than in the New World today. The forces of reaction have little time to think of the problems of the world, still less their phases in Indian life. A saner sociology, a better system of marriage and divorce laws, the method of bringing forth healthy children, their education and training, the doing away with injurious caste customs and communal and racial prejudices, the varied iniquities to men, women and children, the distribution of material resources of living and comfort, these are questions that matter more than all the Gods that gather in Chicago to the call of Bishop Mac Connell. Clouds may thunder, lightnings may flash, yet man has learnt to arrest the lightening. Hailstones may drop, but man can escape the blows. Only gentle rain, modulated to seasonable inches benefits the earth, and the real feat of humanising life in all its bearings remains for science to perform, after the Gods vanish and the clouds disappear.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

WHAT IS REALITY ?

A peacock in all the glory of his plumage dances before a hen. The hen is impressed by the bright colour and proud bearing of the cock, and is eventually conquered.

A monarch in the full regalia of a Field Marshall, seated on a beautiful horse, prances before his subjects at a review. The subjects impressed by the spectacular scene before them, argue the glory and power of the monarch and bow and acclaim him as lord with tumultuous cheers. Strip the peacock of his feathers and the monarch of his regalia and they both become very ordinary beings.

"Vanite' des Vanite's". Man in his vanity once imagined a God. He made that God create the Earth, then the skies, the stars, and lastly life, crowning his creation by a human being fashioned after his own image.

The imagination of man in its stupendous vanity created that God, imbued him with all the glory that it could think of, and then made himself resemble that God.

But what is the reality? We must admit at once that the imagination of the ignorant man, who first invented that glorious illusion, falls far short of reality?

Scientific education has made us conversant with the failings of that ignorant God. His stupendous astronomical ignorance is so evident that it is unnecessary to discuss the point; but for what I am about to say, however, I shall use one of the points over which he lamentably failed.

He made (through the imagination of his inventor) the Earth the centre of the

Universe, and created the Heavens for the sole purpose of giving a boundary to his habitat. Since that day many thousands of years ago, unfortunately for the invention, Tycho Brahe, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, the great scientists of the 18th and 19th century, Einstein and..... Max Planck amongst a host of others, have confronted the world with irrefutable theories, which have forced us not only to doubt the existence of this short sighted ignorant God, but to categorically deny his existence, which was nothing but the product of an ignorant and distorted imagination.

Having done this, have we reached reality? Do we understand the Universe? Has Planck given us the key to energy and all that it means? Has Einstein and his latest explanation of gravitation given us a clue as to why we are here?

I am bound to admit that none of the theories advanced so far has helped us one jot towards the explanation of existence.

Planck's constant of energy is not an explanation, but a brutal fact for which we cannot account; it is the result of mathematical Juggling. Having started with a mathematical premise, carried to a logical solution we reach the constant of energy or rather of "Action". But can we say that it is reality? Does the Universe know anything of the mathematical value we give to this constant of Action? Certainly not! The Action may be in the Universe, but an observer, say in Sirius, would no doubt give it a different value, and another observer on Arcturus would find different value again.

Einstein's theories are on the same line, and so is De Sitter's and the Abbe' Lemaitre's who, when Einstein says our Universe is contracting, and De Sitter says it is expanding, comes forward and says that both are right.

All this is mathematical juggling, and is the product of abstract mathematical thoughts or imaginations. The real problem is our Existence. Do we exist?

Descartes said "J'existe, donc je suis."

But was he right? Is the argument logical? The fact of his "being" was deduced from the argument of his "existence." He presupposed his existence, which was nothing but a presumption on his part. Can any human being, unbiassed by any anthropomorphic idea or training, honestly say, after examination of all the facts in the known universe, that his existence is certain?

It is very much to be doubted, everything points to the contrary. Planck's constant of action seems to be the only fact in our Universe and even of the other universes. But, as is said above, the value given to this parcel of action is itself an arbitrary mathematical value given to it by an inhabitant of this planet. In so far as we have constructed a scientific edifice, this stupendously tiny bit of energy acting for a tiny-period seems to answer our problems. We have resolved matters into a tiny bit of action.

But is it reality?

Planck was not a philosopher. He was a physicist who set himself to account for the reason why a body radiating heat did not get colder than it did, and he found by abstruse mathematical logic that the solution to the problem was because the body did not

radiate continuously, but by small jumps of the value of his famous constant.

Later Einstein showed that this constant of Planck was far more revolutionary than simply accounting for temperature, radiation, and eventually Niels Bohr applied this theory to atomic structure, and the Quantum theory was born. The total result of the theory is to resolve matter into a Quanta of energy which acting for a period becomes a Quanta of action.

This now brings us to the great problem of time. In order to give an answer to the question of existence it is necessary to understand Time, and up to the present no one has been able to even approach the subject with any success.

We understand a period. We say that an electron revolving round the nucleus of an atom is periodic, and a quanta of action for that atom at the particular moment of observation is when an electron has completed one revolution in its orbit, then Planck's constant multiplied by the angular momentum, gives the quanta of action for that period.

This is for an observer on the electron. In our planetary system the same would hold good for the Earth if it is considered as an electron and the sun as an atomic nucleus. The observer in this case would be us.

The difference of outlook between the two observers, in the electron and on the earth, would be in respect of time.

In one of our seconds the electron goes billions of times round the atomic nucleus, whilst we have only made a fraction of our orbit around our sun. The observer on the electron would

reckon up billions of years which we translate into one second.

Imagine now, space filled with many universes, and each universe an atom of any gas of which our suns and stars are electrons. One revolution of those new electrons around their nucleus would be a period of one year for them, and one of our years would only be a *fraction of their periodic revolution*. In their case, if they know anything of Planck's theory or the Theory of Quanta, their constant will have a very much greater value than ours. The only difference between their outlook, ours and the observer on our atomic electron would be the question of Periods. We would argue that we are right in our estimation and they would argue the same in theirs.

Time would appear real for each, but here again would it be reality?

Again I must reply "no" to the question. As a matter of fact we may never be able to answer the Question and until we do, we cannot argue that we exist. For existence demands that something must exist for a time. Existence for an electron, ourselves, and a Trans Universal observer cannot be the same and we cannot say that one is right and the other is wrong.

All we can say confidently is that we appear to exist, such as we are.*

There is a very particular side to this question of time which makes our imagination shudder. As long as we confine

our mind to our Universe we imagine a universal time or think we can, but when we begin to take account of other universes, we cannot hold the shaky argument about the Ether which is supposed to permeate our universe. Our Universe must stop somewhere, and other universes must begin somewhere else. The question is, what is there between the sphere of influence of each universe? Can it be that nothing exists? In that case time also would not exist, it would have no meaning; there would be no action whatever. This thought gives us the very uncomfortable feeling that, perhaps, for an observer on one of our electrons, what we call space between our sun's and stars is totally void of action and consequently our time to them would not exist, therefore we could not exist in their estimation.

We cannot say that we are right and that they are wrong. The whole point is does our universe extend to the whole of infinite space or does it not? There again I am wrong. I use the term infinite which presupposes time. Science to day inclines us to believe that there are galaxies under our observation which do not belong to our universal system. This seems reasonable and all astronomical physics point to the truth of this statement.

If such is really the case, then we must revise our idea of our existence and whatever may be the result of our revision it will certainly not be such as we think it is. In any case, it appears very certain that whatever being has

[*So does a Cobra. All the same, its apparent existence would have a disastrous result on ourselves if he should come in close contact with us. This mere fact seems to prove the reality of our existence to the hilt what ever mathematicians may or may not say. (ED. REASON.)

given us an imagination, it is certainly not the God made by man in his vanity. May it not be that we only exist in the imagination of that being and are only the product of his dreams? May it not be that our existence, such as we think it is, is only an illusion of his mind? I put the question, but do not

answer it, for, who knows what is reality.

Where now is the peacock and the monarch?

Vanité' des Vanités.

E. TERNEL.

ORIENTAL RATIONALISM VERSUS CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

"Before the Christians went to Africa the Africans had lands but no Bibles; now they have Bibles but no lands." Such a statement comes from Professor J. J. Cornelius in his article "An Oriental Looks at Christian Missions" in the April issue of Harper's Monthly for 1927. The quotation is all the more astonishing, coming, as it does, from a distinguished Indian Christian of a fourth generation.

The steadily growing anti-Christian movement in China and other Asiatic countries is an open challenge founded on an increasing knowledge of Western civilization, and the failure of Christianity to influence it. It is directed against an alien religion which Oriental patriots deem to be greatly inimical to the rising tide of nationalism and to the conservation of their culture. The abuse which the Christian missionaries have offered to the traditions and to the culture of the East has been intolerably great, and has wrought for almost the entire destruction of Christian influence rather than for its promotion. This is evidenced by the fact that the majority of converts are usually those of lower, illiterate classes whose economic situation compels them to embrace Christianity. To the intelligent and rational

Hindu, Turk, or Chinese the "Inner arrogance" of the missionary, his tacit and somewhat bold assumption of superiority, and the often brutal and disrespectful zeal he exhibits are but the confirmation of the Oriental's instinctive feeling that the occidental messenger of Christ, with his unscientific and primitive theology, is a menace to the cultural and political integrity of the Orient. One cannot expect the courteous and sensitive Chinese, for example, to be otherwise impressed when some fanatic Christian zealot enters a Buddhist temple during the time of worship and bawls forth in "his coarse, alien Chinese" that Buddhism is but a superstition and that those attending should become Christians. He escapes to the open air again simply because a super-imposed law will not allow the Chinese to take the course of justice with this irreverent interloper. So can we forgive their indignation when one of this same brand attempts to tear down the sacred Taoist shrines or to perpetrate some other flagrant violence which his twisted and warped conscience deems to be for the glory of God.

The missionary's activities in the field mentioned above, and his ingrained habit of misrepresentation and dissimu-

lation are exemplified in the grossly distorted and often fabricated stories he spreads at home about the Eastern lands. The burden of hymn-ranting is "Hindu Immorality", "Unjust Social Class Distinctions", "Heathenism", and "Widespread Illiteracy" everyone of which has its counterpart in the West. With these tunes he so plays upon the heart-strings of the simple folk of Western lands, that they lay out their pennies and dimes with lofty enthusiasm that the "poor, benighted Heathen may be given the Light of God". Strangely enough, this is assumed to be sufficient to illuminate one and all of the dark social maladies enumerated above. Such subterfuge can only humiliate the Hindu or Chinese, but serve to add more to their cup of bitterness. Moreover, missionary literature.....has been one of the potent causes of the implied assumption of Western superiority". This tendency has developed that enormous "complex", which the thinking men of both hemispheres greatly deplore.

In addition to his unfortunate propaganda, the missionary often embodies the spirit and act of political interference. For instance, one reads this statement quoted by Mr. Robert E. Speer, Moderator of the American Presbyterian Church in "Christianity and the Nations", page 51: "Without our help, Asia will never rise above its low level; and even granted that the politics of European powers are not purely unselfish, we must nevertheless, keeping the ultimate object in view, approve of the interference of Europe in the affairs of the East, and give the undertaking our hearty support."

To the sincere Oriental, this conscienceless combination of gunboats and

the beatitudes is a shuddering monstrosity, inhumanly come up from some self-aggrandizing group of religious enthusiasts of the West. By means of this interference, the missionary and his convert have gained exclusive privileges. They have secured a special protection in China to the effect being exempt from the payment of taxes for the governmental support of the native religions, whilst these last must yet pay to support Christianity. "So long as the missionary is peaceably practising and teaching the message of Jesus Christ", he is not to be molested. A sufficiently ambiguous clause enables him to do anything from insulting a native's religion to his face, up to breaking through a religious procession. Another example was the missionary's participation in the forcing of unequal treaties on China—Tientsin, Nanking, Shimonoseki, the Boxer Protocols, and the particularly flagrant imposition of the "Toleration Clause" after the Opium War of 1844. French missionaries had acquired illegal leases for building churches, houses, and other structures for religious organizations. Missionaries were used by France to take possession of Annam in the eighties, a fact that is well known to the readers of World history. In another region of the world, Kenya in Africa, the missionary has been the main factor in securing the white dominance, as demonstrated in the unjust Land Act of 1913 which reserved for the whites 88% of the land and even deprived the natives of definite tenure over the remainder, comprising an area of about six thousand square miles.

Tang Liang Li says in "China in Revolt", a book widely accepted as moderate, "There is no group of

foreigners who have done more harm in China than the modern missionaries, either directly or indirectly. It is in connection with their subversive activities that China has lost the greater part of her dependencies. By their teachings they have denationalized hundreds and thousands of Chinese converts and have thus been instrumental to a great extent in disintegrating not only the body but also the spirit of the nation." "The missionary" he continues, "constitutes a greater menace than the captain of a hostile armada. Indirectly, by his misrepresentations, he has made the civilization of China and India grievously misunderstood in the West and is therefore largely responsible for the loss of prestige which China has suffered for nearly a century." It is a recognized fact that the mission, whether intentionally or otherwise, is a centre from which radiates the spirit of denationalization. The convert goes to the foreigner for advice and aid, and becomes in spirit an alien within his own country. "The foreign missionary cannot cease being foreign, however passionately egalitarian may be his principles, and his power over his minions will be proportionate." And imbued with that intemperate aggressiveness so peculiar to his type, the missionary does his best to disparage all things native, with the result that he sows dissatisfaction with, and dislike of, the native culture in the convert's breast, causing him to become in thought and act a stranger among his own fellowmen.

The missionaries claim that they have accomplished wonderful things for the East, and point proudly to their mission hospitals and their sectarian schools. However, only on paper are these two institutions anything but farces. The

mission schools, in particular, are used for Christian propaganda from end to end, having science courses glittering from afar merely as a bait to lure those who otherwise would never come. Therein English, Biblical literature, and Western Political History are taught, while native history, religions, and languages are totally ignored or barely touched at all. Tacitly or openly, the traditions of the East are undermined; the indigenous religions are represented as fiendish; and the children and the young people are filled with pious fictions from the Christian mythology. The hospitals are used mainly to snare prospective converts; the medical corps, being poorly paid, is seldom professionally capable; the experimental clinics and laboratories necessary to a modern hospital in a region where new and strange diseases are either widely prevalent or liable at any moment to appear, virtually do not exist; and the service rendered is always at the cost of the beneficiary's native religion, for Christianity is thrown in his teeth as being responsible for what good he receives.

The only conclusion one can reach is, that the missionary, on the whole, does not appear to be a vital factor in either the social or the political reconstruction of the Eastern nations. This is not an unfair statement, nor is it made on the spur of the moment or with any sense of prejudice against western civilization, divested of its theology. In the West itself, as Mr. Spengler avers, religion is only pious formulæ. The rationalist mind of both East and West considers that the greatness of the West has been achieved in spite of its professed religion, and its noblest, its finest, and its most enduring gift to humanity, has been

its science. Certainly the Oriental may be forgiven for denouncing a religion which exercised little if any effect among those who have been under its influence for nearly seventeen centuries. He feels that as Christianity, by means of its dogmatic religious principles, held back the material progress of Europe in the Middle Ages, so may it prevent the growth and the development of the Orient now. Western science has had to fight its way step by step against Christianity, and the names of hundreds of martyrs to this cause are familiar to every school boy. Looking over the widely spreading field of History, the Easterner sees that Christianity itself is an extraneous growth even in the West, a religion which fought and conquered for a time the material civilization of the Roman Empire, remained supreme during the centuries the barbarian hordes swarmed the world, but which has now lost the battle before the scientific, industrial, and thoroughly material, modern world, and that in a few centuries it will have faded into the twilight of desuetude.

Why is it that the East should accept this alien cult which is in the process of disintegration in the West? Has the East not been sufficiently retarded by her own religions which have bound the mind of man for centuries with that tremendous, world-denying mysticism so peculiar to Oriental theology? When the Westerner speaks of India's having been thus a victim to psychical bonds, he must not on the other hand extol a Christianity whose founder was an Oriental with a mind which denied the world and stated all material life to be negative in value. Thus the Oriental thinkers would discourage the spread of Christian principles, which the more

advanced critics of both the East and the West consider to be impractical and obsolete, while the Western civilization itself, detached from Christianity, with its marvelous material development and scientific attainment, would be the goal of their dreams.

Hence, all the Orient welcomes the expert, the professional, scientific worker. The East is thankful for Western education and Western ideas. Here is one reason for the success of Soviet Russia in the East; she has sent artisans and scientists, organizers and producers, instead of propagandists and parasites, which, unfortunately, are the epithets with which the Oriental nationalists describe the Christian missionaries. This interesting fact is well summed up in the witty remark of a certain Kuomintang writer; "The missionary offers the Chinese the Kingdom of Heaven, but to the rationalistic Confucian this appears too remote; the communist helps China to establish the Kingdom on Earth, and Celestial seizes on the prospect with joy." In the same manner may one explain the attitude of India. One cannot appreciate the Christian missionary whom she knows to be the agent of alien religious zealots who aim to undermine and disintegrate her own culture; she realized that the Christianity he teaches has an emasculating and weakening influence on the convert in this modern time—since the Indian, unlike the Western Christian, cannot assume the alleged truth of an idealistic and transcendental religion without practising its tenets—and thus she feels that her life rests in her ability to rid the East of this formidable menace.

In the Orient, contrary to rather general opinion in this country, intellectual en-

lightenment and scientific progress have come about in spite of the missionary activities. The industrial development of natural resources, the founding of first class technical schools, and the awakening of national self-consciousness, owe their better aspects to the scientific and political stimulation of Western civilization. Persia, for example, has been rehabilitated by American financial experts and not by the religious representatives. Turkey, the foremost power in the Near East, likewise owes its progress, not to the exponents of Christianity, but to the excellent and efficient military training given by German experts from 1910 to 1918; to the Young Turk Movement which got its inspiration from Western political governments; and to the influx of Western science and systems of finance and commerce. Why should one expect national ills, political and social in nature, to be cured by religious work of any kind? Austria after the World War asked for a financial commission and not a Church Conference; to the further extreme, is it any more ridiculous to imagine her asking for an embassy of Buddhist priests to help her in her troubles than to picture the Orient's calling for missionaries and other religious representatives? Certainly, Christianity has been employed primarily to

undermine, obstruct, and destroy the native intelligence. Only when religion may be reduced to what it really should be, a system of ethics which ministers to a life of excellence and good quality instead of superstition, can be beneficent principles of co-operation and human welfare be realized, and the march onward be undertaken by both the East and West.

For in sciences lie the only unity of the Orient and the Occident. Science and its almost infinitive potentialities for social betterment and industrial progress, may bring about that necessary co-operation between the two great sections of the World. The fact that the East needs Science and not Christianity to develop it, has no better example than Buddhist Japan, a nation now a power in the world; or Mohammedan Turkey mentioned above. Instead of concerning ourselves with vagaries and phantoms like the Christian concept of humility and self abnegation or World Unity through Theological conquests, let our thoughts dwell on practical, useful material things—the needs of people and the needs of nations. Therein will be the salvation of the East and the satisfaction of the West.

VISHVANATH S. ABHYANKAR.

There is no doubt that missionaries are greatly encouraged in India. Lord Irwin, the ex-Viceroy, recently stated in England that the missionaries in India were a great help to the Government and should be encouraged. Governors and other officials in India never miss the opportunity to emphasize this and praise the activities of these missionaries. Patriotic Indians, who fully realize the meaning of this official patronage, would do well to encourage Rationalists to open schools and colleges in India to counteract this powerful and influential missionary propaganda. Indians should read Dr. Paranjpye's book "The Crux of the Indian Problem" to realize clearly the menace of the missionary activities.

(ED. REASON.)

"THE REVOLT AGAINST GOD."

"O fools, he was God, and is dead
He will hear not again the strong crying
of earth in his ears as before,
And the fume of his multitudes dying
shall flatter his nostrils no more.
By the spirit he ruled as his slave is he
slain who was mighty to slay,
And the stone that is sealed on his
grave he shall raise not and roll not
away."

Swinburne. "Hymn of Man."

The title of this article, is that of an essay by a Congregational clergyman, contributed to the May number of *Harper's Magazine*.

Mr. Stanley High, the pastor in question, is no ordinary preacher. After taking a theological degree at Boston University he spent some years in Europe as a newspaper correspondent, later he became assistant secretary to the Methodist Board of Foreign Missions; then editor of the *American Christian Herald*; and is now a minister of a Congregational Church in Stamford, Connecticut. Evidently, Mr. High is a man of wide and varied experience, both secular and religious, and, as an earnest Christian, not likely to exaggerate facts at the expense of his religion.

The drift of the times, says Mr. High, is away from religion, and particularly from the organized religion of the churches. "Despite," he continues, "the long-held doctrine of the theologians that man is 'incurably religious,' a vast and increasing number of people are demonstrating that he is not." Not that they are definitely opposed to religion, says Mr. High:—

If pressed, they would probably confess to some obscure but unconsulted convic-

tions which might be identified as religious. Normally, however, they are indifferent to the whole matter. There is no point for them in the argument as to whether it is possible to get along without religion. For all apparent intents and purposes they are getting along without it. And the disturbing fact is not that so many of them get along, but that they appear to get along so well. In short they have no conscious religious life, and they do not seem to miss it. They do not revolt against God. They simply ignore Him.

Americans, before the war, were fond of speaking of the United States as "God's own Country," the expression is never heard now, except ironically. It is now thought that the less God had to do with the business the better for his reputation. Mr. High tells us of a newspaper man who recently made a sixteen-thousand-mile trip through the American country-side, during which in his search for information, he asked many questions, among others, as to what help they were getting from their religion in these disturbing times? "Only one man," he writes, "said that his church and his God were a prop to him. Nowhere did I encounter a genuine religious feeling. Everywhere I encountered scepticism, distrust, amusement at the beliefs of our fathers. Christianity is hardly to be considered at all as a force in American life, in directing its currents and desires."

Mr. High also cites from a letter he received from a successful business man, who has recently given more time to religion, sitting on religious councils, boards and commissions. Sent as a

delegate to a denominational meeting, he writes: "I would be in a happier frame of mind if I had stayed at home . . . We went through all the religious motions. But I could't escape the feeling that we were shadow-boxing." Speaking from his own experience, Mr. High tells us: "I am the minister of a more than ordinarily loyal church. Normally, however, our one Sunday service brings out not more than twenty per cent of our total membership." What must the attendance be like at the other churches!

Turning to other countries, and commencing with England, Mr. High cites the following from Mr Joad's book, *The Present and Future of Religion*: "To-day nobody spares the money to build new chapels for the same reason that nobody would attend them if they were built. As for the Church of England, even if there were churches and congregations to fill them, which there are not, there would not be enough clergymen to attend to the congregations. It is difficult, indeed it is impossible, to keep up the existing numbers of the clergy and the supply of recruits falls off year by year." Even the fool of the family is no longer pushed into the Church, for no one can tell how much longer the Establishment is going to last. There are even members within the Church, who propose that the Church should disestablish itself, and thus anticipate the coming execution.

In Germany, says Mr. High, the German League of Freethinkers "has an active membership totalling something over 700,000. Two hundred thousand German children are enrolled in its schools of Atheism." Its propaganda among the working classes in the towns: "has now extended into the rural districts where it is making startling headway. Largely as a result of its propa-

ganda, the churches of Germany for a number of years have reported a steady net loss in membership totalling as much as 300,000 in a single year." In Turkey, Russia, and Spain, religion has been disestablished, and secular education adopted in the schools. Any sceptic who, before the war had predicted that such a thing would shortly come to pass, would have been regarded as a weak-minded optimist; yet it has happened, and amid the crash of thrones and dynasties, the marvel has not attracted the attention it otherwise would have done.

Take, for instance, the disestablishment of the Caliphate in Turkey. Our own Government was extremely nervous about offending the religious susceptibilities of our Mohammedan and Hindoo subjects and so starting a holy war; even the missionaries, to their disgust, were not allowed a free hand here, as they were in China, Africa, and the South Seas. This was owing to the Indian Mutiny, which was caused by a belief among the Sepoys, that their cartridges were greased with the fat of the cow and the pig, thus defiling both the Hindoo and the Mohammedan. Yet, when the heavy hand of the new Government descended on the Caliphate—the Caliph was the successor, or viceregent of the prophet Mohammed and the spiritual and civil head of the Mohammedan State—there was no holy war proclaimed, no insurrection of the people to save their religion, there was no trouble at all, or nothing like we expected.

It was the same with Russia and with Spain, accounted as the two most backward and steeped in religion of all the European States. How different from the Middle Ages, when, during a period of two hundred years, Europe hurled army after army into Palestine, in the

Holy War to take the tomb of Christ from the care of the infidel, and an empty tomb at that! Evidently we are witnessing a world-wide movement away from religion. France led the way in the eighteenth century, by disestablishing the Church during the French Revolution. It was restored by Napoleon under his Concordat with the Pope: only to be disestablished again, and the religious orders expelled, for interfering in politics and scheming against the Republic during the Dreyfus affair.

It seems passing strange, if, as Christians are never tired of claiming, Christianity is the source of all that is good in our civilization, the protector of the poor, the liberator of the slave, the advocate of women, and all the rest of it; that directly the proletariat attain freedom, their first action is to disestablish this beneficent faith which has conferred all these benefits upon them, and send its priests packing! But the workers do not judge by words but by deeds, and, as Mr. High, referring to the Industrial areas of the United States observes: "Religion there, if not an opiate, is at least a sedative. Here, then, is a further

reason for this drift from religion." Many religious leaders, says Mr. High: "are frankly bewildered because, in the present crisis, there has been no significant turning to religion." Previous periods of tribulation have been "great days for the Church." "Other help failing, men and women have sought the consolations of religion. It is difficult to see any significant indications of such seeking at present." No, the great war showed the futility of that. Mr. High considers that the drift from religion is plainer here than anywhere else.

In conclusion, Mr. High declares, that if organized religion is to regain its position, it will have to work to the principles laid down by Jesus. We do not think it would succeed. It is too late in the day. The trend is definitely away from religion. If the people do not turn to religion in the hour of adversity, it is very certain that they will not do so in the hour of prosperity. The chief driving force hitherto behind religion has been fear. People have now lost that fear, and with it they have lost their religion.

W. MANN.

in *The Free-thinker*.

CATHOLIC ADVICE ON THE "SAFE PERIOD"

It is well known but often overlooked that birth control, in the broad sense of voluntary family limitation, is not only condoned by officials of the Catholic Church but that, under certain circumstances, confessors are allowed to counsel their parishioners in this direction. Official church literature even countenances such birth control when it is practised merely for economic reasons. The procreation of children is stated to be only

one of the objects of marriage and is in itself not essential to marriage. Indeed, Catholic writers are quite in harmony with the "birth controllers" in contending that "married couples have not the right to bring into the world children whom they 'are unable to support.'" The command "increase and multiply and fill the earth" cannot mean that every person reaching puberty must necessarily breed — else those who take the vows of chastity

(nuns and priests, e. g.) would be living contrary to the will of God. The Pope's Encyclical of 1930 says:

Nor must married people be considered to act against the order of nature, if they make use of their rights according to sound and natural reason, even though no new life can thence arise on account of circumstances of time or the existence of some defect. For there exist also both in marriage itself and in the conjugal use of the rights which it confers, some secondary ends, for instance, mutual assistance, the fostering of mutual love, and the allaying of concupiscence; and these aims the parties are not in the least forbidden to pursue, always under the condition however that their action preserves its intrinsic nature and therefore also its necessary relation to the primary end.

These and other illuminating facts one may read in two short treatises dealing with the "natural method" of birth restriction, published recently (chiefly for the clergy) by the Catholic Press "with ecclesiastical approbation." *The Rhythm of Sterility and Fertility in Women* by Dr. L. J. Latz, and *The Sterile Period in Married Life* by the Very Rev. Canon Valere J. Coucke.

The central idea of these books is not a new one. The old suggestion of Capellmann (19th Edition! in 1923) which has had a large adherence, held that a woman is fertile only for the first 14 days and the last 3 or 4 days of the menstrual cycle. That the Capellmann schedule needs revision in the light of the newer knowledge is recognized by the present authors, and they proceed to formulate the recently published data on the "safe period" for the more precise instruction of Catholic readers. They opine that

since moral theologians approved the Capellmann theory, they must also approve its revision as necessitated by the march of science.

This "revision" is very well done and the new observations are clearly stated and strictly applied—albeit too strictly and inflexibly, especially by Latz, as though the researches cited were the last word instead of only the latest. The effort is however most commendable.

The chief researches of the fertile period which the authors make the basis of their recommendations are those of Ogino of Japan and Knaus of Austria—hence somewhat unhappily called by Latz the "OK" theory. Knaus applied to the study of women what had been discovered in rabbits, namely that the uterus contracts upon the injection of pituitrin before ovulation, and is refractory once *corpora lutea* have formed in the ovary. The turning point from responsiveness to refractoriness, therefore, marks the time of ovulation. The test showed ovulation to take place in women around the fourteenth day of the cycle (limits: days 9 to 18). Ogino, on the other hand, argues that the correct calculation is from the expected menstruation back, namely 12 to 17 days. Since he never found an unruptured follicle after the 11th day preceding a menstrual flow he designates the 11 days of the end cycle as absolutely sterile, no matter how long or short the cycle may be. This conclusion Ogino says has been justified in the immunity to pregnancy experienced by his patients who have followed the rule. The texts reviewed quote other authorities (Smulders, Guchteneere) on the "splendid" results obtained among "normal" couples who have carried out the instructions conscientiously.

The authors under review have, furthermore, acquired certain other results of recent researches that question the "established" textbook teachings of gynecology. They recognize, for example, the great irregularity of the menstrual cycle in women, which usually comes to light once the calendar is used and records kept. The physiology of the *corpus luteum* in relation to the changing motility of the uterus has been well digested by the authors, as indicated above; and they have gathered the idea that both the egg and the sperm are quite short-lived once they reach the female genital tract.

By and large the reviewer subscribes to most of these conclusions and has recently published his views in Chapter XIV of Allen's *Sex and Endocrine Glands*. In short, he believes that there is a relatively safe period, holding that the prevailing gynecological notion namely, that a woman may ovulate and therefore conceive on any day of the menstrual cycle— is based in part upon uncontrolled evidence, in part upon inexact observation. The exigencies of space prevent discussion of the evidence; suffice it to say that the reviewer has made dozens of exact determinations of ovulation in the menstruating monkey by methods not applicable to women, and observations on the monkey agree almost to a day with Knaus' findings.

In the schedules worked out and tabulated by the present authors there are, however, several difficulties. The first refers to the low ebb of sex desire in women which all students of the subject report as obtaining during all but the end of the Ogino safe period. It is probable, however, that this defect is overcome in part by the beneficial effects on sex desire of abstinence during the

three weeks of positive or relative danger of conception when the prudent couple practises self-control.

The second shortcoming of the "natural method" is a more serious one; the safe period is not yet proved beyond peradventure and certainly the exact ovulation rhythm for any given women cannot as yet be determined. Like all physiological processes it is doubtless subject to great variations, just as the length of the menstrual cycle and the character of the flow are extremely variable. The Ogino method of counting back from the expected first day of menstruation is not only impractical but, if monkey cycle is anything like the human cycle, the method lacks experimental basis; for in the monkey the post-ovulatory moiety of the cycle is much more variable than the pre-ovulatory. That is, counting forward from the day is safer than counting back even if the exact "expected" day were known beforehand. Moreover, the method of Knaus is now being subjected to scrutiny and has been found wanting at the hands of various investigators. The prevailing opinion that ovulation may occur at any time of the cycle cannot, therefore, be brushed aside without much further proof, at least so far as the human species is concerned.

The authors recognize the dilemma: "Figure as closely as you can," says Dr. Latz, "keep a record of your menstrual cycles for a year to get the norm; get several cycles again after pregnancy and lactation. The results will be as good as the data." But what is to be done about it while gathering the necessary information for constructing a safe schedule is not disclosed. Probably abstinence is implied. Abstinence during the fertile period is the keynote of the method and

abstinence is praised even if it be absolute until the menopause and nature renders the woman permanently sterile. In case a woman were ill and her life in jeopardy through a pregnancy a further curtailment of the period of intercourse is the only suggestion made.

In evaluating the natural method Father Coucke is less categorical than Dr. Latz. Says the former: "Consequently confessors must make use of the greatest prudence and circumspection of suggesting anything to their penitents about this time of agensis, as long as the existence of the latter and its exact delimitation remain uncertain."

We thus get back to the sensible conclusion that the "safe period" is not absolutely safe. To this statement one may reply, however, that no method is absolutely safe, though in intelligent hands failures with contraceptives are extremely rare. Nevertheless, it is the reviewer's judgment that the "natural method" does offer Catholic women who avoid contraceptives out of religious scruples something that is likely, if followed closely, to reduce the incidence of pregnancies to a point approximating the record of our birth control clinics.

So much for the more scientific aspects of the volumes. Matters of creed

or sentiment are outside the purpose of this review. Here and there are passages which suggest medieval sophistry, as for example the distinction between the natural method of birth control, periodic abstinence, and artificial methods, chemical or mechanical. It is argued that, inasmuch as God made the safe period and put sex desire into it, it is right to take advantage of it, since nothing is done to interfere with nature's processes. The marital act thereby maintains its intrinsic nature, that is, semen is deposited in the vagina and the migration of sperms is not interfered with. "In the case of contraception there is a deliberate frustration of the *act* of marriage whereas in the case of periodic abstinence there is no frustration of the act of marriage." It is gratifying, however, to find a writer who is not worried about underpopulation, which might result, but has not yet been proved to result, from voluntary birth restriction: it must further more be encouraging to advocates of birth control to find a moralist who is quite willing, in the light of the palpable good that comes from information on prevention to face the danger to the "morals" of the unmarried that may arise from a dissemination of the information.

CARL G. HARTMAN.

In The Birth Control Review.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

Suicide.

These days we see thrillers like *Frankenstein*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Dr. X* and read of brutal murders and suicides. These thrillers and murders seem to be akin; in all these thrillers we see so much of murder. But

suicide is something different. It evokes pity rather than horror. The attitude towards this act is undergoing a change. In the West it is being considered as an intelligent and sensible way of ending life when one does not see any further use for it. When a man

like Justice McCardie commits suicide, one do not stop to reflect. But there are other groups. A large number kill themselves to escape financial responsibilities. Others feel they are misfits and want to run away from this life. It is the acute despair arising out of this conviction that drives them out of this life. Though the attitude of the public in the West is undergoing a change yet here we are still ruled by the same old laws. Should a person succeed in committing suicide, he gets the relief he sought and earns from the jury a verdict "while temporarily of unsound mind" This is because suicide was considered a very heinous crime and is still considered so by the bulk of people who are uneducated. It is this ancient attitude that sets the law against him should the person unfortunately fail to kill himself, unless it be Mr. Gandhi. No sooner has he recovered sufficiently the police place him before a magistrate who promptly sentences him to a period of imprisonment. Now I cannot for the life of me understand how this can ever be considered the right sort of treatment. A person who wants to run away from his friends, from all those that are dear to him, and even from life itself, is shut up in a prison with criminals. Surely this cannot correct his desire for death nor increase his desire to live. Once he comes out of jail, most of the people treat him as a curiosity. I had a professor who once attempted to cut his carotids; he failed. Luckily, he was not sent to jail; that would have been the end of that man. In the first few days of the term most of us tried to catch a glimpse of his neck and his scar. But he always came to the class with a high collar and a scarf. The

professor was acutely conscious of what was going on in the back of our minds. That made him more shy and reserved. *This is not a singular case. Every suicide attracts and gets more attention than he wants-unless again he is of the type of Mr. Gandhi.* Our method of dealing with those people who are genuinely sick of life needs revision. *They want the company of sympathetic friends and not of criminals.* Some of them probably think that the next life might be better. We are not aware of any. Till then, they have to be pertinently shown that there is still a lot of place for them under the sun and that compensation for our life must be found in life itself.

* * *

R. A. I and The Soviet—A Monsignor's discovery.

Mgr. Michel D'Herbigny contributes an article on "La propagande Sovietique antireligieuse" to the February numbers of *Revue de Deux Mondes*. He puts forward the theory that the anti-religious movement that is now seen all over the world is under the patronage and guidance of the U. S. S. R. who utilise this movement as a cover for their communist propaganda. He says that elimination of religion is the first step in Soviet propaganda for it wants people without scruples, and religion is a bar to the breeding of such types. "Pour y reussir, il faut que les terroristes et leurs agents soient affranchis de tous les scrupules. Il faut donc eliminer la religion. La religion fait obstacle aux passions des masses et á la froide tyrannie du terroriste; elle a pu eveiller des scrupules, jusque chez un Lenine pendant ses derniers mois de maladie. Il faut donc la liquider. De cette liquidation les Sans-Dieu militants sont

chargés. Le communisme veut conquérir le monde tout entier ; c'est donc au monde entier que doit s'étendre la lutte antireligieuse" (page 575).

In writing that religion is a hindrance for men without scruples, the Monsignor evidently forgets history for religion has never been a bar to tyrants : nay it has very often been a supporter. Gods and churches did not condemn the last war, nor the brutalities in various backward countries. They only prayed for the success of their arms. He then describes the methods of propaganda followed in different countries. In writing about India he spends half of his space in tracing the communist movement till the Meerut trial after which, he writes, the Friends of the Soviet have lain low so far as the political propaganda is concerned and have now launched on a anti-religious war. Read what he writes ; it is priceless for a Monsignor.—"Des lors, les affiliés taisent leurs aspirations politiques et sociales pour s'en prendre à la religion. Avec prudence toutefois. Car hindous et musulmans sont passionnément attachés aux traditions religieuses qui les opposent mutuellement. C'est donc le christianisme qui doit être attaqué d'abord, surtout les catholiques, petite minorité, que les propagandistes de Moscou n'espèrent pas gagner, mais dont l'ascendant religieux gêne leur influence. Par suite les affiliés de Moscou appuient et doivent appuyer deux organisations ouvertement antireligieuses, qui travaillent depuis 1930 sans manifester leur subordination à Moscou. Le Premier Association antisacerdotal (The Anti-priestcraft Association) change de nom après un an d'existence et s'appelle depuis février 1931 l' Association rationaliste de l' Inde (The Rationalist Association of India) etc.....La Association a pour

organ la revue mensuelle Reason, récente, mais déjà répandue ; les membres l' Association payent cinq roupies par an. Ils sont invités (Ladies and gentlemen) à une "cooperation active" (page 535).

He mentions two more organisations "the Friends of the Soviet" started at Clive Road, Bombay on the 15th May 1932, and the Self-Respect Movement of South India. I am not aware of the Friends. But I know that the Self-respect movement is doing useful work in South India and both its organ Kudi Arasu and its Editor, a member of our Association, are coming in for a good deal of rough handling from the Catholics in the South. The Self-respect Movement is essentially against the caste system and against religion as a supporter of that iniquity. The writer being a Monsignor always manages to find every movement to be anti-Catholic for one reason or other.

With the propaganda of the Soviet we are not concerned. But we are all concerned about our supposed connection with the Soviet. Though our friend does not say so quite openly yet he says enough to give everyone the impression that the R. A. I. is connected with the U. S. S. R. This sort of an impression should not be encouraged because of the peculiar political conditions under which we live. There have been attempts made to put an end to the publication of Reason by moving higher authorities ; so far they have not been successful. This supposed association with the Soviet can be one more tool in the hands of mischievous persons. That is why the lie of the holy man must be nailed to the mast. I have been associated with the Rationalist Association and its predecessor, The Anti-priestcraft Association right from the very inception and never has there

been a single occasion when the Soviet has been mentioned. I have an assurance from the Secretaries that there has never been any connection whatsoever, nor are the affairs of the Association managed by "Friends of Moscow". The membership list of the Association is very varied and naturally contains people with varying political opinions but that does not in any way mean what the holy monsignor wants us to understand. It is surprising that a dignitary of the Church should make such insinuations but probably he has made them in the name of the Lord and the morning after he wrote off this article he must have said Holy Mass and quaffed the Blood of Christ and eaten the Body of Christ who the Monsignor teaches is Truth Incarnate. They are his ways but they are not and cannot be the ways of the members of the R. A. I.

The Monsignor accuses the Soviet of using antireligious movement as a cover for their own communist propaganda. But is that not what Mgr. D'Herbigny doing himself? His article from one end to the other is to show that people must be careful of militant atheists because they are introducing communism in the country. He trades on the present hatred and fear in which the U. S. S. R. is held by all other governments. By fusing the antireligious movement with communism he hopes to rouse the suspicion of the powers that be and organise a drive against free-thought and rationalism. Anything is possible in this world especially after the behaviour of the Nazis. But it will certainly be the twilight of our modern civilisation if the wish of the Monsignor is fulfilled.*

Brahmins all !

I have been thinking of leaving the Mahatma well alone, the more so as I learn that he has been having more milk

than he could digest. But the recent event in the family has made me change my resolve. I do not offer any apology. When the fast of the father for personal reasons and for the purification of the Ashramites could be a reason for the suspension of a movement for which thousands have courted misery, is not a happy occasion like the marriage of the son enough reason for us to change our resolve? The wedding had to be a religious affair. Spirituality reigns supreme at Parnakuti. What is more, the young Shastri had to raise Devidas to the rank of a Brahmin. Till today, I did not know the interpretation of the young Shastri—one always lives to learn! I have read that more things are wrought by prayer, but this is certainly stunning. A non-Brahmin becomes a Brahmin by the force of Mantras. The Self-respecting Movement and the Harijan Movement will have to drop their sails because the latest act has robbed the wind out of them. There can no more be a Harijan question. All can become Brahmins and Brahmins we will all be! But pardon my stupidity. What about the untouchable daughter in the Ashram? Why did Gandhi consent to the elevation of Devidas to a Brahmin and all that, when the cause of Harijan is nearest to his heart. One of the attributes of God is his inscrutability and probably the Mahatmas since they are potentially gods, should be having this in progressive degrees. The point here is that out of the great respect that the nation has for Gandhi, it has to stop thinking if it is to be with him in some of his doings. He arrests the process of thought and rationalism in the whole of India, as the bulk of the people are still marionettes controlled by him.

ALI AKBAR,

* We add a few words in French for the benefit of Monseigneur D'Herbigny. Nous n'avons rien de commun avec Moscou ou avec le communisme. Ce Monseigneur doit être un reveur ou un fier menteur-pour avoir tiré une histoire pareille de sa tête. Voici encore une preuve de la propagande malhonnête des Catholiques contre leurs adversaires. C'est honteux de la part d'une personne respectable de faire de pareilles allegations. Le but est clair. C'est d'éveiller les soupçons des autorités contre nous. C'est ainsi qu'agissent les laches partout.

(LA REDACTION.)

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS.

On the sixth of last month was celebrated in Bombay the birthday of Prophet Mahomed, the Founder of Islam. To our knowledge, it is the first time that the Prophet's birthday was celebrated with so much eclat. It was a public holiday and several meetings were held at which a number of speakers eulogized Mahomed

as a religious founder of far reaching influence and sagacity. They dilated on the great benefit he has conferred on the world by the wonderful religious reform he introduced. Others spoke with great enthusiasm on the glory of Islam, the liberty and brotherhood it preaches, and the culture it spreads. They

spoke with eloquence on the Unity of God as the brightest achievement of Islamism, and seemed to think that the preaching of a peculiar kind of monotheism, as was taught by Mahomed, introduced into the world a culture unheard of before.

* * *

It is true that before the advent of the Prophet, Arabia was steeped in heathenism, the characteristic feature of which was the worship of certain stones at Mecca which the Prophet sought to abolish in the teeth of strong opposition. It would appear, however, that he did not quite succeed in abolishing the cult of stones at Mecca, and that he met with such resistance as to oblige him to make a compromise. Even now, pilgrims who go to Mecca for the purpose of the Haj are obliged to walk seven times round one of those stones formerly worshipped. —“The Kaaba”. There are, it appears, other stones there which, though preserved, are no longer worshipped.

* * *

Before the heathens of Arabia were converted to the monotheism of Mahomed, they seemed to have reached a high degree of culture and civilization which made them keen students of science and philosophy. We know how enlightened were the Saracens when they conquered Spain. The Prophet, himself, who belonged to Mecca, was a merchant by trade who must have been well acquainted with the surrounding countries with which he traded. Many believe that he was a very intelligent and observant man, and that the gross idolatry he witnessed during his journeys, prompted him to introduce a religion purged of all idolatrous worship. Some say that he was a pupil of Nestor, from whom he learnt all

the doctrines of Judaism, and Christianity, and his monotheism was a protest against the idolatry he saw among the Christians of that time. Whatever it may be, it is clear that the Prophet was a thoughtful and enlightened man, and was a keen religious student. He belonged, besides, to a respectful family and it is stated that his uncle was also an enlightened man. All this shows that the inhabitants of Mecca at that time were not the savage barbarians we are told they were. Many of them must have been enlightened enough to appreciate the revolutionary reform Mahomed introduced in their religion.

* * *

It is remarkable that the early Arabs were keen students of science, and that their culture and civilization were a contrast with the barbarous condition they met in countries which they conquered. It would appear that they lost all this culture and civilization the moment they began to take the mysticism of Islam seriously, and concentrated all the attention on the Koran which they regarded as the Book of Books. From that moment, Islamism became synonymous with ignorance and fanaticism, despite the claim of brotherhood, liberty and all that.

* * *

It is quite possible that in theory Islamism is a monotheistic religion. Allah, who is represented as being most-merciful to the faithful, is all the same, an abstraction which the common herd cannot comprehend. These require something more tangible for worship, and we find, in effect, a widespread cult of the Tomb in Mahomedan countries. The practical religion of the average Mahomedan is in practice the cult of the Tomb.

Every city, town, and village, has them in abundance, so much so, that "holy Darghas" are of considerable importance to Mahomedans in general. It is clear that these satisfy the religious aspirations of Mahomedans and compensate for an abstract belief in the deity.

* * *

As regards the practice of brotherhood, liberty, and equality one must admit that these ideas are more discernible among the Mahomedans than in the adherents of other religions. The followers of Islam also claim that their religion is very tolerant and that the Prophet insisted on this. Possibly so. Unfortunately the zealots among the Mahomedans, in trying to make Islamism an exclusive religion, have made it an intolerant creed and declared that all who are not in its fold are Kaffirs doomed to eternal perdition.

* * *

It is a pity that in its present condition Islamism does not make for culture. If one wishes to judge the culture of which some enthusiastic Mahomedans are fond of boasting, one has to look for it in Arabia, Persia, the Sudan, Turkey, Turkistan, Afghanistan and among the hordes of the North West frontier of India. Here, in India, the Mahomedans are among the most backward of the population, and it is well known that the conservatives among the Indian Mahomedans are not very keen on modern education. It was remarkable that among all the exuberant speakers who spoke so eloquently on the merit of Islamism that day in Bombay, only one referred to the appalling ignorance of Mahomedans in general, their indifference to knowledge, their intolerance of honest criticism and fanatical disposition on religion.

* * *

There is no doubt about this. It is significant that in Turkey the Young Turks, who modernized that country and introduced Western culture, were strongly opposed by the conservative Moulvis who looked upon all these innovations with great horror. The Young Turks, of whom Kemal Pasha is such a bright ornament, were mostly Rationalists who had abandoned Islamism. In Persia also, the Moulvis and other bigoted Mahomedans were the strongest opponents of reform; while in Afghanistan the enlightened Amanullah met his reverse at the hands of ignorant fanatics. It is strange after this to hear of the culture of Islam from individuals who must have a queer idea of what culture and enlightenment really denote. In Mahomedan countries in general, among the Indian Mahomedans in particular, the cachet of respectability and culture is to be looked upon as a very religious man. Evidently it is still a long, long way to Tipperary!

* * *

One characteristic boast of the Mahomedans is that Islamism has taught them to worship one God. Why should the worship of one God be considered superior to the worship of fifty, since the question of the existence of one or several Gods has never been solved to the satisfaction of anybody. It is after all, a mere belief which may or may not be true. The Greeks and Romans who worshipped thousands of Gods were very cultured and civilized people and they evolved codes of ethics and morality which were very sound. The Hindus, who worship millions, claim that their civilization is a very ancient one and is worth emulating by the Westerners. The Christians who worship three gods, though by a curious reasoning they

persuade themselves that three are one and one is three, claim that their religion is the only true one,—a claim the Mahomedans also make for theirs. The Jews, who worship Jehovah, their tribal God, do not deny that there are other gods, but only claim that Jehovah is the mightiest and the only one who deserves their worship. Finally, we have the Buddhists who form one third of the population of the globe, who do not worship any God at all, and yet their codes of ethics and morality surpass those of all these believers in one or several Gods. The important question one may ask a Mahomedan is this: Does your religion make you a better man than a Christian, Hindu, Jew, Buddhist, Parsee or an Atheist?

* * *

H. H. The Aga Khan, in an article in an English paper, teaches how to get *in touch with God and to be in harmony with him*. We appreciate those practical lessons from His Highness. We have no doubt that His Highness is one of these rare mortals (Is he really a mortal?) who are perfectly pleased with themselves in so

far that they are in complete harmony with the Deity. When one earns tons of money easily as a representative of God on earth, life must really be very harmonious. Few have this unique privilege. Were His Highness otherwise than happy and contented to be in harmony with God whom he knows so well, he would be a very ungrateful person indeed.

* * *

The Nazis have made peace with the Catholics after a little show of persecution, clumsily staged and acted upon. Only fools will be taken in by this camouflage. The Nazis and the Catholics are one and the same, and doubtless, the Vatican is in full agreement with their programme. Jew baiting was once the favourite pastime of the Catholics and the burning of heretics with their books was considered a very pious and meritorious occupation. The Nazis are only carrying out that which is a familiar business. The next step will be the full installation of the Inquisition all over Deutschland and the celebration of *auto da fe's* to edify a materialistic world. Go ahead Hitler!

MALICIOUS PROPAGANDA

Nobody is more audacious and ridiculous than the average Roman Catholic priest who claims that the religion he preaches is the only true one; that it alone makes man righteous; that without it there can be no salvation, and that without it man becomes unscrupulous and dishonest, and civilization is endangered. When one hears such a claim from a person who is generally considered to be enlightened and cultured,

one begins to wonder whether there is not a mistake somewhere; whether the mentality of such a person is not rather defective. As a matter of fact, it is impossible for any well balanced individual to make such a claim without running the risk of being taken for a simpleton, or one who is absolutely out of touch with the realities of this world.

To a well informed Rationalist, it is unnecessary to remark that the auda-

ceous claim that Catholicism is the only true religion is ridiculous in the extreme, though there are still millions of fools who naively believe this. A smattering of knowledge of Anthropology and comparative religions enables any fair-minded person to trace its origin and to demonstrate, as clearly as possible, that like any other religion, it is a growth from barbaric ancestry, based on a theory of things, quite plausible four hundred years ago, but no longer tenable in the light of modern knowledge. Its very claim is preposterous. It claims in effect, that Jesus Christ, himself, who was God, founded the Catholic Church and appointed his Vicar, who is the Pope of Rome, over it and that whatever it officially teaches must necessarily receive divine sanction. The authority for this audacious claim which permits a few knaves who have adopted a peculiar mode of life and dress, to lord over the body and soul of man is the Gospel and Tradition. The Gospel testifies to the Church; The Church testifies to the Gospel! Such a story can only appeal to those whose will to believe is already disposed that way, or to those who follow a religion blindly, because it was that of their ancestors: such as we find among the masses who have no intelligent idea what it is that they believe. If people were intelligent enough to form the habit of making proper enquiries before accepting a creed, few, probably, would be found in the fold of Roman Catholicism which makes such a demand on one's credulity.

The same, of course, holds good for any other religion based on supernaturalism, which requires blind obedience to its pretensions. Taking Roman Catholicism as an example of a religion which thrives on the credulity of the ignorant,

one can safely say that its strength lies in the stupidity of the people, who though believing in it, have never given serious thought to its claims, and to a serious questioning of the alleged facts on which it bases its foundation and the formulation of its dogmas. Roman Catholic education is precisely opposed to this. Its aim is to discourage keen inquiry in these things, and one can well imagine the reason why Catholic priests are so anxious to control the education of the young. This explains why among the sciences, Geology, Astronomy and Biology are not encouraged in their schools. They know that if Geology is true Catholicism must be hopelessly wrong, despite the quibblings of its teachers in assuring the uninformed and the muddled-minded that science is not at variance with the teaching of the Church! Let us take the story of creation as an instance of an erroneous idea on which it bases one of its fundamental dogmas—that of the Atonement and Redemption, without which Catholicism becomes perfectly meaningless. If its story of creation, with the Fall of Man, is correct, Geology cannot be true. If it is true that the world was created as recently as seven thousand years ago, that our planet came into existence simultaneously with the Sun and the Stars, that it is the centre of the Universe and that the rest of the heavenly bodies were created for its benefit, then Geology and Astronomy must be radically wrong.

It is for earnest seekers after truth to consider seriously which is likely to be wrong—Geology and Astronomy which are based on facts that can be ascertained any day, or that grotesque story, a pure myth, invented by ignorant men who could not think of any other theory to account for all that is. If Catholicism

is true that man was created in the manner it teaches, and that he is endowed with something called a Soul which leaves the body at death to continue a separate existence in another world, then Biology must be altogether wrong. Biology, as we know, traces the origin of man from quite a different source and no more recognizes an immortal soul in him, as a distinct entity, than it does with the horse or the elephant. The honest inquirer after truth will be impressed with the fact that the belief in the existence of the Soul is only a question of faith, and that there is not an iota of proof in support of it. Imagine priests, who trade on the question of the Soul, honestly giving up this belief! We have no quarrel with those who refuse to consider these questions in the light of modern knowledge and common sense, and prefer to pin their faith on a religion founded on myth and fables. This is their own business. What we strongly object to is that people who believe such things should assume superior airs, boast of their moral excellence and cast aspersions on those who honestly reject their creed. These men must be taught that their arrogance and insolence have been tolerated too long. From their own pulpits, before their own submissive and unsophisticated congregation they are safe to say what they like. They can run down other creeds, boost their own and make believe what they like. In such circumstances, they certainly run no risk of contradiction. When, however, they appear in public to do likewise, they must be taken to task sharply. In this respect we are not in agreement with many easy going Freethinkers who think that these stupid men should be left alone as they are already a discredited lot and only ignor-

ant people listen to them seriously. To a certain extent this is, no doubt, quite true; but in many countries where the political and economic conditions demand it, they still wield a good deal of influence which they can exert to create serious mischief. They can even do so in countries where people, from a strictly religious point of view, do not care two hoots for their religion. See what is going on in Germany now. The Catholics in action under the political guise of the Nazis! Even the clumsy camouflage of the Nazis, pretending to persecute Catholics, hastily staged and duly cabled all over the world, will take in only the thoughtless and the simpletons. If the Catholics could again exert their sway over Europe as they did once, they would shamelessly persecute all who do not belong to their fold. Such being their tendency, we take a serious view of the action of a Monseigneur D'Herbigny who, in the February Number of the *Revue de Deux Mondes*, (a brief notice of which appeared in our last number) has libelled the Rationalist Association of India and insulted its members by describing them as unscrupulous people plotting against the Government of India, under the guise of an anti-religious Association with the support and encouragement of the Soviets! This grave and malicious accusation cannot be allowed to pass unchallenged. He must be made to prove his mischievous allegations, and if he cannot, he must be branded publicly as a mischievous wicked liar, whose object was obvious:—to get us into trouble with the Government of India. While these cowardly Catholics dare not interfere with the powerful Freethought Associations of Europe, here, in India, they are trying their best to fish in dirty waters by accu-

sing the existing Freethought Associations of India of being in league with the Communists of Russia.

They know full well that at the present moment the British Government is not well disposed towards Russia, and here, in India, since the Meerut trial, the Government is very suspicious of everything Russian. They therefore, think that the time is favourable for their dirty work by trying to put us under the suspicion of the Government of India. They have, in South India, attempted the same tactics, with the same object of course, against the Self-Respect Movement of South India, which, we are informed, is a Freethought Association to combat caste prejudice and other religious evils there. We appeal to every honest person in this country to defeat the sinister propaganda of these cowards, and we have no doubt that the Government of India will treat them with the contempt they deserve.

Little notice will be taken by all unbelievers in religion about the insulting remark of Monseigneur D'Herbigny that they are unscrupulous people, and that only a belief in religion

makes people scrupulous. The man must be a fool and a wicked person to say this. He should know, if he had enough of common sense, that unbelievers in creeds are generally people of high culture and education with strong moral convictions. He should reflect that a Catholic is not a better person than any other. He may be just as good or just as bad. If he wants to know of the actual state of Catholics from a moral point of view, he should consult the criminal statistics of many countries. He will discover that in such countries as Germany, Holland, Denmark, Belgium, Spain and America, the percentage of Catholic criminals according to the population is much higher than among the adherents of other creeds. He will be surprised to learn that it is the lowest among unbelievers. He must also seriously reflect why all the gangsters of Chicago and New York, the bandits of Italy and Sicily are all down and out Catholics. Perhaps he is unaware that most of the murderers of kings and Presidents have been Roman Catholics—"By their fruits you shall know them." This bishop appears to be serenely unaware of this.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

SOMBRE PLEASANTRY.

My friend, the reader, may now doubt my identity. Every previous "Reason" is witness to my dry philosophy. It should naturally raise an expectation of the continuance of the same mood. The monsoon has set in, and it is wet season even for philosophy. If the reader still persists in doubting that it may not be after all 'me' that is writing this, as I have done on many a former occasion, I ascribe his doubt to his own creed, just as I attribute my present mood to a fresh vein opened somewhere in the folded recesses of the brain. And what acts as the bottle-opener is the cart-before-the-horse performance of Mgr. Michel D'Herbigny, whose French or logic, I, luckily, cannot follow. I understand enough to realise that the Rationalist Association of India stands a very fair chance of improving its status through his courtesies, and "Reason," a wider publicity and deserved attention. The 'anti-religious movement that is now seen all over the world' is really the horse, which the divine Monseigneur mistakes for the cart. The communist U. S. S. R. is the mere cart which the world-horse may or may not draw the whole distance. The Soviet wheel may bend or break before its speed adjusts itself to its heels. Russian anti-religion may itself have been a reaction against pious aggression, just as political tyranny precipitated a constitutional catastrophe. Temporal conditions give shape to the world-history, of which the Russian epoch is but an example and the result. Theological diagnosis that would discern the cause of the heterodox world in Russian grounds may as well search for the head in the region of the tail. The Soviet

scare in the religious mind is the lineal descendant of an ancestry that was bothered by the belief in witchcraft. Evidence or none, the witch should be burnt.

But, for the peace of the holy, living, soul—and, even sportingly, I shall not believe in souls in an afterworld—I shall dig up my memories of a few sacred relics, from their eloquent grave. Of course the Right Honourable John Mackinnon Robertson is now no more amidst us. But the soul of Saint Robertson is in his last saying recorded in the January (1933) number of the "Literary Guide" (London). It should be enough to allay the fears of hysterical churchmen posing themselves as the sentinels of political safety. I do not expect that the atmosphere of Catholicism ever suffers to pollute itself by entering into the spirit of the controversy that closed with the article of J. M. Robertson, headed "Contaminated Ideals". Rationalism, here and elsewhere, fights ignorant tyranny at all fronts. But rationalist organisations in England and India have more to combat with religion and all that goes in its name, than risk their meagre forces in the one-thousand-and-one logical deductions in diverse fields. It would be an illusion to feel assured that in the religious field, rationalism had achieved all that should be, even before the birth of the Rationalist Association in India. Energy meant to be stored for one direction will not be dissipated by being diverted to other channels, whatever their merit. In social, economic, political, municipal, industrial and other fields, there is the all-too-pressing cry for practical rationalisation. But like the

specialists in scientific knowledge, it is the care of specific organisations that should rise and each work out the solution in its field. Then will the witchburners have plenty of occupation for their hands, and their holy zeal will merit a yet higher salvation. Meantime, the humble devotee at the feet of the apostles of rationalism the world over, concerns himself or herself merely with "combating religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of reason" and "endeavour to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the masses". Though the rationalist scarcely hopes to create anything like that in those that 'say the holy Mass' and those that would place themselves above them, the doors of rationalism, defined as a 'mere mental attitude', may not be closed against the most zealous detective among the ranks of the criminal intelligence department. Nor need one be afraid to own allegiance to an unconditional acceptance of "the supremacy of reason," except it be that one is engaged to remain in association with the tyranny over the mind on liberal terms.

If the holy relic of the late J. M. Robertson's contribution is unapproachable let the Monsignor glance the back-cover-page of any chance number of the "Reason" (Bombay) or the first lines on the opening page of any number of Literary Guide (London.) It does not entail much digging up to smooth the panic-stricken nerve.

Perhaps, like patent-medicine-bottles, these general statements regarding the nature of Rationalism do little good to an acute sufferer who discovered the existence of Reason late in the February number of 'REVUE DE DEUX MONDES.' I needs must unearth a specific for

this Soviet-mania. In the December (1932) number of the Reason there is an uncouth bone, labelled "Collective Consciousness" (pp. 19-22) which may be a little bit hard to go down the ordinary throat. From that, however, I call out the following: "Far more than love, it is the dread of a common enemy that knits tribal life into a homogeneous whole, wherein the individual is even sacrificed for the safety of the community. It is not always concrete physical danger, as some fancied supernatural agency that, calls forth the altruistic tendencies of the primitive mind."..... "Among the civilised nations the circumference of collectivism is seen to expand. Communities overflow into nationhood. But the common interests of the nation are yet imbedded upon fear and distrust of other nations. Fear of the neighbour, and an effort to outdo his achievements in war and peace, it is these that are given the survival value rather than that humanitarian passion for fellow-feeling that is the pronounced goal of human advance."..... "Competition which is another name for the struggle to monopolise the survival-value of the race is seen in armaments, exclusive markets, tariffs, embargoes, in the maladjustments between capital and labour, and in all forms of racial and economic discrimination. History is witness to the limitations of the process of collectivism." "These limitations have resulted in the subsidence of empires, just as the collective tendencies within the nation have brought up their emergence" (p. 21). "On the one hand the exaltation of individualistic propensities and accumulation of wealth among capitalistic nations tends to exclusiveness, bigotry and contempt which must eventually lead to dis-ruption. While on the other the total

eclipses of the individual in the nation-state as in Sparta or modern Russia carries with it the cold discontent and the lack of initiative uncongenial for harmony and peace. For temporary periods men may work themselves into frenzies or warlike activities even for peacetime production, but there is something inherently adverse to the human element in the year-plans of the United Soviet Socialist Republics. In the ambition of mass-production the individual, virtually annihilated, craves for restoration. If collective-consciousness were to mean the total absence of individual consciousness, that is a sign that the pendulum has swung too far." (p. 22.)

European evidence regarding the condition of affairs in the experimental state is not uniform and one may not vouch for the accuracy of the reading of the Soviet barometer that precedes. But enough has been quoted to dispel the illusion that rationalism is indiscriminately in support of the Russian methods of today. It is well known that in England there are socialists as also many eminent individualists and non-socialists among rationalist ranks. Men's views on different questions vary very divergently, and often the best among men seldom care to carry logic to an all round finality. There are the limits set by practical considerations and circumstances of time and place. The late Lord John Morley forcibly set out these factors in human conduct, as affecting belief, knowledge, and behaviour, in that admirable work "On Compromise" recently included in the 'Thinkers' Library of Messrs. Watts, of the R. P. A., London. Having read that book, I begin to think of reinforcing the caste-mark (namam) on the forehead more than ever

before, albeit, it adds a little to the expense, the cost of the materials. But if I were sure, I may serve the cause of rationalism better wearing the caste-mark than by not doing so, I shall not grudge the purchasing price of red powder and white chalk. I have learnt "tolerance" towards caste, which will anyhow go, marked or unmarked!

And on the principle of compromise also, I wear the sacred thread. Nay, I say vespers, though the morning Sandhya Vandanam is eclipsed in the tumult of office-leaping distempers. And why not? When our fathers were praying twice or thrice, why not I compromise by praying once in the day, or in the week, or month, or year, or any other unit in the lifetime? I am tolerant to prayer. And this last reaches my God. And why not, when I, an intellectual devotee, pray, why not it reach him, who reaches folks more stupid than me, and consumes dirty morsels from uglier hands offered at the portals of suffocation that are styled his temples? And when the prayer reaches Him, seated on His High Throne, He listens.' But wait, Shadows are cast on His Person by. The cloudy vapours risen from Mr. Vivian Phelip's brain. His work, 'the Churches and Modern Thought', I recollect, tears in shreds arguments based upon the benign personality of designing Providence. Good luck to this 'logic of theology' which the bible-fathers will not care to touch with a pair of tongs. Having dug into recent memories, some of the holy relics of rationalism are presented to minds trained in the habit of treasuring coarser antiquities. After anything the scaremonger may think or say, rationalism is no 'cobra' hidden in the basket of the snake-charmer. It is

life, not death, and preeminently, human life. Man for ever seeks to live by reason, and even Mgr. Michel D'Herbigny does not profess to rule it out. "The elimination of religion is the first step in Soviet propaganda," for it wants people without scruples, and religion is a bar to the breeding of such types." Apart from the historical truth that all types of unscrupulous people have had their genesis in religion, the statement is a process and a species of reasoning. It may be faulty and fallacious, but the exercise is one of ratiocination. Put in the syllogistic form it reads thus:

The Soviet (X) wants to eliminate religion.

The R. A. I. (P) combats religion beliefs.

Ergo, The R. A. I. is linked with Soviet.
i.e., $X = P$.

It is the fallacy of presuming to know too much. When put in the form of the blackboard exercise, slightly altering to

suit the divine conditions, it should read thus:

The Catholic Church (X) seeks to eliminate reason

The Hindu (or any other) priest (P) fights shy of reason.

Ergo, the Catholic Church engaged the services of Hindu priests,

i.e., $X = P$.

It is more true to say that "the elimination of reason is the first step in religious propaganda, for it wants people without brains, and reason is a bar to the breeding of such types". I hope that these exercises in sombre pleasantry tend to improve the logic of catholicity taken with the mixtures of compromise and humanity. May the sacred relics dismembered from running "Reason" and the overseas "Guide" be constantly worn on the obviously disturbed frames within the Church compound.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

IN RE: REX v/s THE PEOPLE.

Speculation is rife as to what Mr. Gandhi and the Congress are going to decide when they meet.

Reviewing the whole political situation dispassionately and rationally, one has to admit that for the present the Government has the upper hand. But again; viewing it without any Hindu, Muslim, or Parsi bias and rationally, it is regretfully to be admitted, so much the better for India, that Government has still the upper hand.

The Congress and Mr. Gandhi, while they have done an immense good in

rousing a national spirit, yet have not that genuine national and patriotic essence which other such movements all over the world possess. The reason in a nut-shell is that hardly 1% of the "National" Leaders can see at the most beyond their province or caste. Bengal boycotts Bombay goods, Ahmedabad boycotts Bombay Mills, ad infinitum and ad nauseum.

What can one expect from the country's leaders if they are still at the stage where one has to carry Ganges water and a Brahmin cook wherever he goes, and one has a day of silence together

with a passion for goat's milk, to say nothing about a proclivity for staging fasts?

However much the Congress might have tried to make the movement an All-India one, 60,000 Hindus in jail out of 350 millions is by no means an all-India affair. I positively mention Hindus, because, like it or not, the Muslim quota is negligible. The Hindus have definitely made this movement an attempt to make India, a "Hindu-stan"! So can you blame the Muslims for not wanting to be swamped out? It has openly been stated that the Muslims have other Muslim countries to go to and the Hindus have nothing, therefore "Hindu-stan" is not an imaginary statement.

No movement can be successfully carried on a purely destructive basis. Yes, destroy the harmful things, of course, but replace it at the same time by something constructive and sound. There is no unity in the country and splashes of this is not unknown in the Congress itself. Hardly a Hindu trusts a Muslim and vice versa. How can there be any progress?

We have had too much "Bapuji" and "Mahatmaji-ing" and though it may satisfy old maids to become "chelas", this sort of sentimentality cannot appeal to virile young men and women.

Its place is definitely not in a National struggle but in "mumbo-jumbo" cults to which a religious flavour can be conveniently added!

This "Bapuji" fad is fogging clear thought and strong action.

I know, you know, and they all know the C. D. Movement is now played out; but have any of the leaders the guts to admit it, call it off unconditionally, and

so get the men and women out of jail? No, "we can't do anything that will lower Bapuji", but that is precisely what is being done by keeping up a farce.

It is impossible to rule a country that is united and does not want to be ruled, so the first step is to get united.

I am all for Swaraj and complete independence, but not under religion and caste sodden maniacs—it is a question of preferring the frying pan to the fire!

It is also common sense that England is not going to give up India and all that she has sunk here, because she knows very well that without India she becomes, like Portugal, a third-rate power.

It is equally common sense that India is an independent country without the present drain, can become a very prosperous world power, so it is not unreasonable to want to work towards that end.

To achieve that, the first step should be to educate the masses on rationalistic lines, get rid of caste standardize dress, establish hygienic centres in place of temples and mosques, fill posts by merit, not by Hindu or Muslim labels and, in addition, work on the Soviet lines for the agriculturists.

At any cost, this communal virus must be got rid of first. All Swadeshi enterprise should be supported and classified as National, irrespective of its being Parsi, Muslim, or Hindu, or Bombay, Madras or Bengal Presidency.

I tried to get a Hindu sharebroker to sell some shares of a Swadeshi Insurance Company, and he refused because there was a Muslim majority in the Directorate, and this is a staunch Swarajist!!

Our Rulers are clever, they have kept up and pandered to our stupid religious fancies to such an extent that it has tainted our very breath. And those who see this can never hope to lead because of the terrible majority who are so tainted.

History has — or should have — taught us what religion has done for mankind; what rivers of blood have flowed; what inhuman tortures brave men have gone through, all in the name of god — that it is time atheism was given a chance.

What we want is immediate abandonment of the C. D. movement and our young men and women to come out of jail and do some constructive work. There is plenty to be done before India is ready for Swaraj.

We want that every leader should be non-committal and willing to put the cause of the Nation before the cause of Hinduism, Mahomedanism, Zoroastrianism, etc., rather than pursue the present method of pandering to the intolerant caste brahmins and others of that kind. We have had enough of "what's yours is mine and what's mine is my own" tactics. Admittedly, it is impossible to keep away adventurers taking advantage, but one can certainly afford to be more strict in accepting workers than it has been the practice heretofore.

It is not civil disobedience that will make India free, but mass disobedience of the priests. The Leaders should act on that admirable suggestion and get all the moulanas and the brahmins locked up together, so that the meat-eating maulanass would polish off the vegetarian brahmins and then starve to death themselves!

We have all this fuss about the Harijan business and when Gandhi's son weds he is made a Brahmin! If a non-Brahmin can be so converted, the Harijan problem does not entail a farcical fast but a mass conversion!

Mr. Gandhi's span of usefulness is more or less over; his god in his vest pocket played out, and if he still wants sloppy sentimentality to fog clear thinking and strong action, a single fare to the Himalayas is strongly indicated. We have seen what this Inner Voice of his has let the country into times out of number, and it is high time stronger characters than him now took charge. Going into hysterics and a fast simply because some woman misbehaved, is not what I want from my country's leader, specially when thousands of my fellow-men are in jail.

We want a strong organization to push Swadeshi and not play into the hands of Ahmedabad millowners or others.

We have recently seen how when England wanted the release of her guilty countrymen from Russia, she had the embargo against Russian goods so what is sauce for the gander could quite easily be applied here.

Then also our fight should be against our own "toady batches", because if we get the right sort of person into Government services, the Assemblies, etc., we can do a lot towards 100% Swaraj by purely constitutional methods.

At present, a Congressman means only one who wants to get rid of the English, whereas he should stand for United India and not United Hindus. A jolly good shuffling, discarding, and a re-stuffing of our "national" leaders would also help tremendously towards this achievement.

It is no use resuming the C. D. movement and sending more men to jail or talking about "honourable peace" when one is beaten—rather think in the terms of "he who fights and runs away lives to fight another day."

So may we hope the meeting of our Leaders do some genuine thinking and make some strong decisions instead of

talking sentimental slop in the terms of the Inner Voice.

We want the Congress to be a body we can be proud of, not something to be ashamed of; so it is up to the younger element to step forward fearlessly and lead the way.

"A Nationalist Rationalist."

[Though the columns of "Reason" are not opened to political topics, we have published this article as it deals with a greater question than politics, namely, the canker of communalism and irrational mysticism which are so prevalent in this country. Our contributor is right. What we want for the real advancement of this country is constructive work on rational lines and not foolish enterprises that cause bitterness and disaster, leading nowhere. In our opinion, education on the right lines, the discouragement of irrational social customs and absurd religious practices, sound industrial and agricultural enterprises will be more beneficial to India than all this hysterical enthusiasm based on religious mysticism which is pure sentimentalism minus common sense]

ED. REASON.]

THE ETHICS OF ABORTION.

The Hon'ble Mr. B. V. Jadhav, in keeping with the world movement for Sex Reform, has given notice of a Bill to be introduced in the Legislative Assembly as follows:—

A Bill

Further to amend the Indian Penal Code, 1860, for a certain purpose.

WHEREAS it is expedient further to amend the Indian Penal Code for the purpose hereafter appearing; it is hereby enacted as follows:—

1. This Act may be called the Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Act, 1933.
2. In section 312 of the Indian Penal Code,

(a) the words "if such miscarriage be not caused in good faith for the purpose of saving the life of the woman" shall be omitted;

(b) at the end of the section the following shall be inserted, namely:—

"Exception — miscarriage caused by a qualified medical practitioner at the request of a woman desiring it on account of physical, social or economic reasons is not punishable under this section."

Considering that similar bills are being discussed and introduced in several countries, it will not be out of place here to go into the merits of the case for

abortion. It may be mentioned that the most advanced law in this matter is the present Russian law, which has legalised abortion within the first three months of pregnancy and this is done at State expense in approved cases. This law meets with the approval of sex reformers and has served as a guide to other legislators, e. g. in Turkey and Czechoslovakia. It will be interesting therefore to examine the provisions of the Russian law. Any woman who wishes her pregnancy to be terminated at State expense in State Hospitals has to send an application to a committee appointed for the purpose, stating her reasons. If these reasons are approved, she has only to go to the hospital indicated and get it done. If not approved, she can still get it done at her own expense by a qualified doctor, provided it is done within the first three months. This law has resulted in an enormous saving of the lives of mothers who used to die when abortion was performed by quacks.

The same result can be achieved in every country by legalising abortion. The law against abortion, like everything else, has to be judged by its results. It is supposed to be a deterrent law, but it deters nobody. Whether a woman desires abortion for economic reasons or to save her reputation, the motive is so powerful that the most terrible threats will not prevent her from attempting it by all possible means, ranging from "swallowing all sorts of poisons up to gunpowder", says Madame Berty Albrecht, "which often kills both woman and child; penetrating the uterus with every kind of root, bark, bone, vegetable, pin, hook, needle and what not." A French working woman explained her method: "I just insert a katpin inside and I prick, and prick, and

prick until the blood comes out. Mme Albrecht knew a midwife who committed three abortions a day, apart from her normal work; and a girl of 16 who died at the midwife's place, and the scandal was hushed up because her father was a prominent man. She makes a sharp distinction between *legal* abortions done in clinics by skilled specialists, giving a very small percentage of deaths and practically no complications, and *illegal* abortions, done by just anybody, a quack, a dirty old woman, a neighbour, or by the woman herself. It is the *illegal* abortion that she rightly condemns, and it's the present law that *makes it illegal*. It not only misses its point, which is to preserve the lives of future children, but kills thousands of mothers every year. 'Women are not asking for the right to abortion, because they have already taken it without permission, but they want the right to those standards of hygiene which are the pride of the twentieth century.'

The same story is repeated in all countries. Dr. Norman Haire cites the case of a woman in England who took all the sorts of drugs, threw herself down the stairs, jumped off a table, lifted heavy furniture and at last went to a professional abortionist at 4 1/2 months and died owing to his efforts. One of his own cousins went to a medical abortionist who was crippled and unable to walk. "He sat in a wheeled chair, took a syringe out of his pocket, filled it with ether, and as she stood in front of him, he lifted up her clothes with one hand and manipulated the syringe with the other. There was absolutely no attempt at surgical cleanliness." This went on every day for three weeks, when she had

a septic abortion and was ill ever afterwards. Dr. Haire points out that the law affects poor people only, as rich women can always find a doctor to do it properly, or get it done on the Continent, where more doctors are willing to do it though the law is the same.

Mrs. Dora Russell recently pointed out that the death-rate for illegitimate babies ranges from 3 to 9 times the rate for legitimate babies. "If this is not murder, I should like to know what is. And where is the logic or humanity in letting these babes come to full term, cost their mothers the agony of birth, only to die in misery before they are a year old?"

Dr. Robinson, the well-known sexologist, has enumerated and described 24 quack medicines which were sold as abortifacient drugs to women in America and which enriched the proprietors without helping the women. A well-known birth-control advocate in England, who is against legalising abortion, admitted that in one fortnight, she received 14 applications for contraceptive help and 85 entreaties to procure abortion. Miss Stella Browne, perhaps the most daring of English sex reformers, insists that the legalisation should not be limited to cases of disease, mental defect or rape.—"*Any solution short of complete freedom of choice for the woman in the early months, comes up against immense practical difficulties.*" For instance, limitation to proved cases of rape or assault would (a) encourage false accusations, (b) automatically rule out cases of pregnancy in legal marriage and (c) be frequently nullified by the "law's delays" until the child was born! For a great many people, all pleasure in life, or at least sex pleasure, is spoilt by the

constant dread of conception, and Miss Browne insists that sex is not a thing to be ashamed of and everybody has a right to derive pleasure from it. If it was known that a remedy would be available if contraceptives fail, this would relieve great suffering.

Victor Margueritte, the famous French author, takes the view that the foetus is an integral part of the body of the mother and says: "To punish abortion as a crime is not only the result of monstrous hypocrisy, but an attack on individual liberty. The political reason in this case goes against the real interest of everybody." The French Law does not punish an attempt at suicide in the case of a pregnant woman, but does this not necessarily include attempted abortion? The only reasonable course, according to him, is for the law to exercise sanitary control over what it can never prevent.

Let not people imagine that abortions are less prevalent in India than in Europe or America. The cases of child-murder so frequently reported in the papers are sufficient proof to the contrary. I personally get at least 500 demands a year from perfectly respectable people who want to know how to procure an abortion. Of course I am obliged to disappoint them, because I do not knowingly break laws, in spite of my conviction for obscenity by a narrow-minded magistrate, under a so-called law, which is not a law, but an atrocity.

The most important point in the amendment proposed by the Hon'ble Mr. Jadhav is that it is entirely consistent with the spirit of the existing law, which, however, fails to enforce the principles which it accepts, viz. that the life of the woman is more valuable than that of the unborn babe. Since women

are even prepared to risk suicide to save their reputation, and her relatives will often help her to do it, no punishment can stop attempts at abortion. If the child is born, it will in all probability be murdered or die of neglect. The effects of the existing law are monstrous. It neither saves the woman, nor the child. If the proposed change is made, abortions will be done by doctors instead of by quacks, an enormous number of lives will be saved, and the principle of the law will be enforced. Nothing could be more responsible, and those who accept this

humanitarian principle have no reason whatever to oppose the change. As for religious fanatics, no arguments can reach their befogged brains, but in this enlightened age, they should no longer be allowed to tyrannise over sensible people, but should be kept in their place. It is the duty of all persons with a particle of humanity in them to give their whole-hearted support to the amendment in question.

R. D. KARVE.

[From the "Servants of India."]

CHITRAPURI SARASWATS AND RATIONALISM :

A Study in Bhanap Proverbs.

The Chitrapuri Saraswats are a small but advanced community of Brahmins. They sometimes call themselves (and are called) Bhanaps. The late Sir Narayan Chandavarkar belonged to this community; most prominent among them now are Mr. V. P. Row, I. C. S. (Madras) and Mr. H. Shankar Rao, C. I. E. (Bombay). The total Bhanap population must be under 15,000, found chiefly in the two Kanaras and in the cities of Bombay and Madras; small colonies of Bhanaps are to be found in almost every province of India (and in Burma too).

The Bhanaps are in the forefront of enlightenment and have been so for centuries. It follows, therefore, that as a community they are more rational, too, than most (if not at all) other communities. This averment finds

support in the proverbs of their language, Konkani, a dialect born of Prakrit.*

One of their proverbs says "Life before religion." This indicates a radical change of outlook. Centuries ago it was "Religion before life" for all Hindus alike.

In every religion the idea of godhead is more or less fundamental and fairly well defined. One Bhanap proverb says "God is as you imagine." So each person may formulate God his own way. Truly, then, an honest god is the noblest work of man.

Here is another proverb implying the same thing — "Do I not know the attributes of my God?"

Worship of God as usually conducted is losing respect. Says a proverb "*Mantra*

* I am indebted to Mr. S. V. Gulvadi, B. A. L. T., of Gadag, for having, for the purpose of this article, placed at my disposal his MS collection of *Konkani Proverbs current among Chitrapuri Saraswats* (to be published shortly). The interpretations are mine.

and *tantra* (formulas and ritual) I know not, I know to eat and dine". Another proverb says "*Arati* heats the system, *tirtha* cools it," meaning both may for the respective reasons be avoided. (For the information of non-Hindu readers who may not know, I may explain that by *arati* is meant waving hands over lamps waved before God's image and then waving the warm hands before one's face, taking in the heat as purifier; and by *tirtha* is meant taking a teaspoonful of water sanctified by worship). Connected with worship is the burning of incense before God's image. Asks a proverb "Does the burning of incense expiate sins?"—a rhetorical question, whose answer is No. *Patri* (leaves of the *bilva* and other sacred plants) are offered with flowers to the image during worship. A proverb says "The man who had to fetch *patri* was killed by the tiger"—God did not (could not) protect the man though he had gone to do something for him. Another proverb says "The flowers beyond reach may be left to God"—grab everything you can for yourself, but God can be content with the leavings!

As the proverb quoted at the beginning of the last paragraph shows, belief in the value of formulas and ritual has waned. Says another Proverb "say *mama*, and all is done." This requires a word of explanation (for non-Hindu readers, again). At every ceremony the priest repeats the time honoured formulas and prayers (all in Sanskrit, of which both priest and layman are ignorant) and at certain points asks the layman to say *mama* which means mine. The layman's part is practically confined to touching his finger-tips (right-hand) and saying *mama* at intervals, wearing still all the while—

and all the merit supposed to flow from the ceremony flows into him! *Mama* does it! Another proverb says "Repeat, O priest, what thou hast learnt"—indicating that the priest repeats the *mantras* unintelligently and the layman has little faith in the mummery. And the same manner in which the priest submits to this open flouting of divine *mantras* shows that he also has little faith.

Of the daily rites '*sandhi sandhya-randana*,' sunrise and sunset prayers is the most important, and some have also a *japa* or special set of formulas and prayer for a specific purpose; both must be said before meals (if not at sunrise and sunset). A very irreverent proverb says "Damn the *sandhi*, serve my dinner." A more polite one says "*sandhi* is dropped, *japa* is forgotten."

Pilgrimages are being more and more dropped; it is being more and more recognised that since places of pilgrimage are generally hotbeds of vice, pilgrimages are more likely to do harm than good. One proverb says "she went to Kashi, she went to Rameshwar, but her sins have not been expiated." Another proverb says "God owed his grace, the earrings have gone"—words of a returned pilgrim. Not stolen, mind; the pilgrimage has cost him his ear-rings—fine kind of grace! And he feels it!

There is, again, an interesting proverb: "A *rishi* may have said so, but it appeals not to me." This is a distinctly rational outlook—authority must yield place to what appeals (what seems reasonable).

The *puranas* are little honoured. Says a proverb "The brinjals of the *puranas* are in the *puranas* only"—meaning, believe not the puranic stories!

It is customary for persons well read in the *Bhagvad-Gita* and the *puranas* to deliver religious discourses (*nirupana*) based on selected texts. Attendance at these, if analysed, will show that other than unthinking persons few care for these. The remarks of thinking auditors

are crystalised into two proverbs : " A good example is better than ten *nirupanas* ; " " Even a hypocrite can deliver a fine *nirupana*, but few can set a good example. "

UMESH G. DALVI.

THE POWER OF RELIGION

A lengthy letter received the other day accuses me of closing my eyes to the power of religion in the lives of men. I must plead not guilty. I could, if I choose, cite much evidence from others who accuse me of wasting my time in attacking religion, and suggesting that I should expend my energies in a more fruitful manner. In defence here I may plead that I should like to give more of my time than I am able to give to other matters that interest me, and which are of undoubted importance. Some time ago a well known journal asked for an article or two dealing with a particular aspect of religion. I complied with the request and then received an invitation to write more articles on other subjects. I declined on the ground that so few were doing what I was doing that I could not spare the time, but that if the editor would open his columns to articles criticizing religion I would willingly write on " Other subjects. " My offer was not accepted, and the reason was pretty plain. Of all the vested interests and established institutions that one may attack there is none that offers quite the same opposition as does religion. There is not a political party in the country that would not be hopelessly shattered if it made a direct attack on religion. There is not a man aiming at political or social

advancement who would not find himself heavily, or hopelessly handicapped if he made public the fact that he believed all religion to be untrue and injurious. There are few men in business who do not hesitate publicly to denounce religion for fear of suffering in their occupation. The worst, and the bitterest and the most unscrupulous opposition is that which arises from religious animosity. It is not I who fail to take note of the power of religion ; and it is certainly not those who ask me to leave religion alone, or who tell me I am " flogging a dead horse. " Those who openly attack religion know its strength ; those who say leave it alone fear its strength too much to attack it openly.

THE RELIGIOUS MIND

One illustration of the power of religion is unconsciously furnished by the *Evening Standard* of a recent date, in its comments on German affairs. It says :—

Hitler's Germany is to be a Christian Germany. He has restored religious instruction, abandoned under the Republic in every school in the Reich. Every parade of Nazi troops now begins with a religious service—Protestant for Hitler's Protestant followers, Catholic for the Catholics.

The newspapers of July 1 supply a further striking example of the power of religion. Gunman Hitler, or "the men behind the guns," have been endeavouring to "reorganize" the Protestant Churches of Prussia. New Commissions have been appointed, and in one instance a Nazi version of the Lord's prayer has been introduced. So an appeal was made to President Hindenburg by some of the Evangelical Churches of Prussia, and the President asked Hitler to see him and discuss the matter. The President says:—

The dispute that has arisen between the Prussian Government and the Evangelical Churches of Prussia fills me, as an Evangelical Christian, and as head of the State, with the deepest concern. The many telegrams and other messages reaching me show that the German Evangelical Christians are deeply alarmed by this controversy, and are filled with anxiety with regard to their religious freedom... Before God and my conscience I feel compelled to do all in my power to avert these dangers.

This is deeply interesting. It shows that where liberty is threatened we may, in the last resort, depend upon the Christian conscience coming to the rescue. The Christian conscience may remain unmoved while millions of men are deprived of the privileges of free citizens; it is silent in the face of some thirty or forty thousand men who are confined in prison camps, for the offence of not being in agreement with their gangster governors; it can stand the spectacle of men and women being "beaten up," outraged and murdered; but there are limits, and these are reached when these governors lay their hands

upon the privileges of the Evangelical Christian Churches. Then "before God" the Christian conscience of the President takes action, and even the gangster chief feels that he has gone too far, and promises to cease operations—so far as the Evangelical Churches are concerned. It is a striking example of the way in which the Christian conscience stands up in defence of liberty, and of the power of religion on the human mind. Even in America the gangsters never held the Churches up to ransom. It would have outraged their own religious sense and would have united the Churches in an active warfare against racketeering.

RELIGION AND BROTHERHOOD.

The more one reflects on the state of affairs the more one is struck with the power of religion. The Nazis themselves offer a strong illustration of this. They are at one at beating old and young, in starving out those who do not agree with their political programme, in deciding that there must be a large birth-rate in order to provide cannon fodder, they are agreed in a programme of robbery, murder and outrage. In all there is perfect unanimity. But when they parade in order to receive fresh encouragement in their enlightened programme, they break up into two separate camps. The Catholics stand on one side, the Protestants stand on the other, and probably each lot damns the other heartily—as heartily as they both damn the Jews. The Nazis can plunder in unison, they can kill in unison, they can lie in unison, the one thing they will not do, and the one thing that ever Hitler cannot, dare not, force them to do is to pray together. How can one question the power of religion in the face of this phenomenon?

The phenomenon is not peculiar to Germany. In another form we have it in

this country. There are two features about the criminal classes in this country that are fairly well known to investigators. One is their belief in religion, the other is the way in which they carry out their "code of honour." No one has such contempt for a traitor as has the professional thief. To peach on a pal is the most unforgivable of crimes. Here again we have the spectacle of the heartiest co-operation in all kinds of robbery and misdemeanour, combined with an unbridgable gulf in matters of religion. The Jewish crook, the Protestant crook, the Roman Catholic crook, will work loyally side by side, sharing the danger and fairly dividing the spoils. But the Jew would not dream of going with his brother crook into a Christian Church, the Roman Catholic criminal would not think of worshipping in a Protestant chapel. Each know that other offences might be forgiven, but to be false to one's religion is to place oneself beyond hope.

Not even the law dares to outrage this most sacred feeling. The man who goes to prison finds his spiritual needs carefully provided for. In the ordinary routine of prison there is something of a common life. The men work side by side, they take exercise side by side. But when religion enters each class goes to his special pen. The prison regulation carefully provides a Roman Catholic priest, a Church of England parson, a Methodist minister, and in order to be impartial, thoughtfully makes the provision that if

the religious needs of the criminal are not provided for in the variegated parsonic prison equipage, then he may be visited by a minister of his particular denomination, and have a full dress religious parade all to himself. The only inmates of prisons that are not so provided for are Freethinkers. If they will not have one of the prison's spiritual staff they must go without any. They are not permitted to have, say, a representative of the National Secular Society to visit them. And when some years ago it was suggested that the regulations might be altered to the extent of giving to Freethinkers the privileges enjoyed by Christians and Jews the reply was that there were not enough Freethinkers in prison to justify the change. So Freethinkers are compelled to pay for the upkeep of the prisons, and allow Christians, Jews, and other godites to get the lion's share of the entertainment.

HOW RELIGION ACTS.

Most of my readers will be able to supply numerous other illustrations of the peculiar power exercised by religion. They will see it in the usual rule in all sorts of social clubs barring the discussion of religious topics. It is recognized that while men may differ on other subjects and still maintain a friendly intercourse, once begin to differ on religion and good fellowship comes to an end. Why, it is even hailed as a triumph of the Christian spirit that members of different Christian demonstrations can be brought together on the same platform

to work side by side for objects outside of religion. Not all of the sects can reach this height of good-fellowship, but that some of them can be induced to do so after all these centuries of Christian rule is considered a distinct triumph of good nature.

I agree with all that is said of the power of religion; I differ only as to the quality of the influence exerted. In human history, so soon as we get above the primitive stage of existence religion asserts itself as essentially an anti-social force. The condition of its own perpetuation is that it shall resist all change, and

challenge every new idea. It divides where social influences tend to unite, it sharpens hatreds where they exist, and creates them where they do not. Religions hate each other in terms of their religion, they unite in terms of the humanity from which they cannot completely separate themselves. I do not ignore the strength of religion, I assert it. I also assert that it is only in proportion as its power is reduced that the better elements of human nature will have opportunity for undisguised expression.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"In the Freethinker."

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS.

The London Literary Guide for August last has published in full the text of the law recently passed by the Spanish Parliament dealing with religious organizations and institutions. On reading this one cannot but be impressed with the very just and sensible manner in which the Spanish Republic has dealt with the

Catholic Church in Spain. These new laws deal with the questions of Freedom of Thought and of Worship, the Legal Position of Religious Organizations, Control over their property, their Educational Work, Charitable Institutions, and Religious Orders and Congregations.

These laws ensure freedom of thought and of worship to every one. "All religious organizations may freely practice their religion within their places of worship." It is declared that the State itself, shall have no official religion. The legal position of religious organization is also clearly defined, and a just control is established over the property of religious organizations. As regards the teaching work by religious organizations, it is enacted, that (Section 20). "The Churches may establish and manage centres devoted to the teaching of their respective doctrines and to the training of their ministers."

Inspectors by the State shall ensure that within them no doctrine contrary to the safety of the Republic shall be taught."

Regarding the Control of Charitable Institutions, Sec. 21, among other things, declares, "All Charitable Institutions and Trusts whose patronage, direction, or administration depends on authorities, corporations, institutes or religious juridical persons shall now be obliged, if they were not before, to send within the term of one year an inventory of all their property, securities and objects, as well as to render an annual account, to the Ministry for Home Affairs, of their property and of their financial activities, even if they were exempt from rendering such by their foundation Charter."

Penalties for failure to comply with this section are mild, and every facility is given to the parties concerned to do their duty without undue coercion.

The laws regarding the control over the property of religious organizations are elaborate and fair. Section 11 enacts:—"Places of worship of all kinds and their adjoining buildings, episcopal

palaces, and rectories with their gardens, adjoining or not, seminaries, monasteries, and other buildings devoted to the use of the Catholic Church or of its ministers, shall be public national property. The same condition shall apply to furniture, ornaments, images, pictures, vases, jewels cloths and other objects of this kind installed therein, and devoted expressly and permanently to Catholic worship, to its display or the needs directly connected with it."

"The property and the rights appertaining thereto, referred to in the previous paragraph, shall remain under the safe guard of the State, as the Juridical embodiment of the nation to which they belong and shall be subject to the rules of the following sections."

* * *

Section 12 defines the above section and specifies in what manner the Church may use the property and rights above mentioned in the interest of Catholic worship. "They will remain in the hands of the Catholic Church for conservation, administration and use according to their nature and function. The Church shall not dispose of them and shall confine itself to employing them for the purpose for which they are assigned." Sections 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19 make these laws very clear and show that the State has not the slightest desire to be hard on the Catholic Church and its Ministers in Spain.

* * *

Such laws are indeed necessary in every country in order to define clearly what are Church properties and those of religious orders. The Church, in effect, everywhere claims such properties, as above defined, as its own. This gave rise to a great deal of misunderstanding in France

when the laws of the separation of the Church and State in that country came into force. There, similar laws as those now framed by the Spanish Parliament were passed and immediately the Church raised a hue and cry that it was pure despoliation. By doing this it tried to raise prejudice against the alleged high handedness of the French Government and to enlist sympathy. The French Government, however, was not a bit disturbed by these tactics as it was easily proved that the properties in the keeping of the Church did not belong to it.

* * *

To make this clear it is only necessary to say that all lands and monies for the purpose of building churches, schools, monasteries, etc in France were given by the State and subscribed by the public. The Church had absolutely no right to appropriate these or lay claim to them except that portion which it could prove was purchased by its money. Suppose tomorrow the Government of India were to pass similar laws for the control of Roman Catholic buildings and lands in India. The Jesuits of Bombay, for instance, could not legitimately claim that St. Xavier's College or St. Mary's School with the adjoining properties, etc, belong to them. They never contributed a rupee (from their own pocket) towards the acquirement of these properties. The Government, the Municipality and the public provided the land and money for the same, under the belief that these were needed for the benefit of the public. These properties do not belong to the Church or the Jesuits who administer them.

* * *

The Holy Year is in full swing and every stunt calculated to raise the emotion and piety of the faithful is being done to

make it a success. During the last Lenten festivals, according to "Le Journal" of Paris, a perfect debauché of religiosity was witnessed in Rome--The ascent of the Holy Staircase by the Pope on his knees and the adoration of the Holy Relics when he reached the top was one of those impressive stunts which doubtless edified the superstitious Italians who always crave for these shows. The next stunt we are told, will be exposition of the so-called Holy Coat without seams which is preserved at the Cathedral of Treves at which it is expected that millions of spectators will be present.

* * *

It makes one smile to think that in this enlightened age (is it really enlightened yet?) There are still millions of people who believe that all these "holy relics" are genuine. Those associated with Jesus in particular ought to make any intelligent person wonder at the audacity of the Church in claiming these to be so. For four hundred years these relics laid buried somewhere in Jerusalem until St. Helena, the mother of Constantine (all new converts) visited Jerusalem where, in a dream, it was revealed to her where all these relics laid buried. They were, of course, conveniently discovered and carried to Rome in great triumph. Somehow or other the Holy Coat got lost and more than a thousand years afterwards it was found to be in the possession of Sultan Bagazet. It was purchased by Pope Alexander VI, of infamous memory, and again found its way into Europe and is now safely preserved in Treves. St. Helena also discovered the Cross on which Jesus was crucified, the nails, the crown of thorns, in fact, all the relics connected with the passion of Jesus. During the

Middle Ages there was a regular craze for relics and as brisk as was the demand there was a supply. Nothing is more degrading than to read of the belief and traffic in those spurious relics and the vast sums of money that the Church acquired by this means. Any rationalist who may be interested in this would do well to read "The Reliquary—A Collection of Relics" by Jocelyn Rhys in which one will learn of the stupidity of believers and the roguery of priests and monks. The belief of the Hindus that the sacred toes of the goddess Kali, which after being cut in heaven fell on Earth at Calcutta where the temple which preserves them is located, is really a more sensible belief than that of the average Catholic in all the relics in the collection of the Catholic Church. Yet, the conceited Catholics think they can afford to laugh at the credulity of the Hindus!

* * *

With the readiness with which a Catholic generally laughs at the beliefs of other people, a Catholic lawyer of this city was very much amused that the High Court, Police Courts and Small Causes Court of Bombay were partially closed on the 21st of August last on account of the eclipse of the Sun which took place that day. It would appear that most of the learned Hindu lawyers, and Hindus graduates of the Bombay University, etc had to observe in their orthodox fashion the prescribed formalities during the time the eclipse lasted. They could not take a morsel of food, do any work and had to take a bath at its termination and so forth. Our Catholic friend was rightly surprised

that educated people should believe in these things exactly as the most uneducated do. So do we. Every educated person knows the cause of an eclipse and that the event can be predicted years before it happens. Every one knows that it is a natural phenomenon and has nothing to do with gods or demons, yet we find learned lawyers and other people doing the same as the ignorant do as if they really believed the cause of this phenomenon to be due to the agency of malignant spirits. After this it makes one despair that Rationalism can make any head-way in India.

* * *

Our Catholic friend, however, was unaware that three or four hundred years ago the same terror was shown in Europe on the appearance of a comet or the occurrence of an eclipse. He did not know that a comet was believed to be the harbinger of evil happenings, that it foretold the death of kings and the advent of wars and other dreadful calamities. He did not know that a Pope ordered all the bells of Churches throughout Christendom to be rung and issued a Bull to scare away Halley's Comet when it appeared three or four hundred years ago. On the appearance of a total eclipse of the Sun in 1550, people were so scared that they crushed one over the other in the churches to make their confession and the coffers of the churches were not large enough to contain the offerings of the people. Our friends, the priests have really good reason to deplore the good old days and to curse science as a disturber of faith. As well may they exclaim." "On sont les neiges d'antan?"

KILL COMMUNAL FRANKENSTEIN

OR

IT WILL KILL YOU.

Students of English literature know that Frankenstein, a student in Mrs. Shelly's romance of that name, created out of fragments of bodies, picked from churchyards and dissecting rooms, a human form without a soul. The monster so formed had miraculous strength, animal passions and active life, but *no breath of Divinity*. It longed for animal love and animal sympathy but was spurned by all. It was most powerful for evil, and being fully conscious of its own defects and deformities sought with persistency to inflict retribution on the young student who had called it into life. The monster felt that he was unlike other human beings and in revenge murdered the friend, the brother and bride of its creator. He tries to murder Frankenstein but he escapes in a wood. The monster hides himself and slays Frankenstein on his way home.

It is a melancholy and humiliating fact which we can hardly deny that we are now in the grips of communal Frankenstein, and if we are to live, this state of things cannot, must not, and should not be allowed to continue. That the evil is rising and growing is apparent to those who have eyes and will see. Bombay, is the most cosmopolitan city in the country, and though she has a common electoral Roll for municipal purposes, its elections are not free from communal bias. Can any one who has seen local city elections deny that voting proceeds on communal lines? One who is new to the City may well consider polling as a meeting of the Mahajan of Jamatkhana and of Panchayat. Even sport is not free from communal

spirit. Otherwise why such calls for quadrangular matches. To take a recent case, the services of members of neutral communities had to be requisitioned to settle the Lal Baug Market dispute.

Admitting,—and this cannot be denied,—that the disease is there, the question is: “Is there anything in the *milieu* or environment which gives it greater vitality at present than before?” In my opinion, the trouble we are having, though apparently communal, if analysed, will be found to be greatly economical and more than that, political and is the result of discontent with the present situation. The Mont-Ford Reforms introduced a new chapter in the governance of India and it was then fondly believed were a step in the direction of responsible Government. The working of the said Reforms have brought about disillusionment. The said Reforms gave India tongue, but not the voice, in the governance of the country, and the disappointment, because of hopes created, has been therefore all the more. The Reforms gave “vote” apparently more importance than it has been found it has in reality, and the valueless vote has succeeded in dividing Indians more than before.

This has been the more easily possible because India being the “home of stark want”, the struggle to get a “place” is more acute. Hence we have more “placemen” than statesmen.

The Mont-Ford Reforms were followed by the Simon Commission of which the Joint Parliamentary Committee, presently holding its meetings, is the successor.

These have acted as irritant, and we find that Indians not having a voice either in politics or economics of the country—the only arena in which they are free is religion—these “free-slaves” are strutting the political stage like automatons pulled by strings, political and economic. That is why we find representatives of various religions at the Joint Parliamentary Committee speaking for “religion” and not for the country. A more tragicomic sight it is difficult to imagine, and Great Britain, the arbitrator, is gleefully watching the game like the mighty Lucifer. MacDonald may well take credit for having arranged this theatrical show. He may take holy unction to his soul that by his communal award, which is but one more ordinance, he has solved the question, but I am afraid he has failed in his duty as guardian of Law and Order. His duty was not to encourage those who live “on” and not “for” religion. He should have taken a long view of things and told these “hangers-on-religion” that religion is no concern of the State, but is *personal* to a citizen with which the State has and can have nothing to do. But MacDonald, perhaps, on the principle, that India’s difficulty is Britain’s opportunity, has given his award

and I am afraid has added a few inches to the Communal Frankenstein. Just as the storied monster felt that he was unlike other human beings, Indians, no matter of what caste and creed, will *ultimately* feel similarly, as MacDonald by his Ordinance has lowered all of them, because of percentages, weightage, reserved seats, etc. into *communal animals*, and I have no doubt that the *Indian* in them is sure to rise,—I hope sonner than later,—and revolt against Britain’s anti-democratic, anti-national and anti-rational policy.

The political sky for the present is clouded, but I see a ray of sunshine in the fact that Dr. Mohammad Alam, from his sick-bed, has sent forth the cry “*Ecrasez l’ infame*”, and I trust his Anti-communal League will grapple with the communal Frankenstein and kill it. I am of opinion that in politics what we do not get as *Indians* is not worth having as a Hindu, a Muslim, a Sikh or a Christian. Nationalism can never be built on communal foundations. Our political status based on “religion” will be but a building without foundation and hanging in the air.

LAKHIMIDAS ROWJEE TAIRSEE.

RELIGION AND MORALITY.

The Senate of the University of Bombay is to be congratulated on rejecting the motion of Prof. Gokhale to encourage religious teaching in the schools and colleges under the control of the University. If the worthy professor had confined his aims to imparting a knowledge of comparative religions,

he would probably have had many supporters. A comparative study of religions is most useful in freeing the mind from the narrow belief that only one’s own religion is the true one. It enables one to trace the evolution of beliefs, to understand the similarity of the ideas which gave rise to the different practices one

witnesses in different religions and it must, if well understood, dispel erroneous ideas about religion in general, while it cannot but make one realize that all religions originated in the fear of the unknown and the desire to flatter benevolent spirits and propitiate malignant ones.

It is, however, a fallacy to believe that only a knowledge of religion can impart moral ideas to man. No religion can claim to have been the originator of a moral code for mankind. This has been evolved by the laws of necessity and is to be found nascent, in all primitive societies. As a matter of fact, no human society, not even, in our opinion, a society of the higher animals can exist without a code of ethics which has been naturally adopted for its protection—all anthropologists are in agreement on this. Religion might have elaborated this and introduced the notion that the gods themselves have given moral codes to man. It certainly has carefully defined the attitude that man must observe towards the gods and the penalties that man risks in disobeying them and so forth; but its claims cannot go any further. In assuming the guardianship of morality, no religion, except perhaps Buddhism, has based morality on the unaided efforts of man to improve himself by bitter experience and the inevitable recognition that evil doing is harmful in the long run. All religions base their ideas of morality on the assumption that the gods reward right doing and punish evil deeds. Man, in fact, is not exhorted to do good for his own benefit, but because it pleases some god or gods who reward or punish as they please—very often in the most capricious manner.

With most religions it is a *sine qua non* that to obtain the full favour of

gods it is necessary to belong to the particular religion in which one was born. Certain religions teach that there is actually no salvation except through belief in the particular religion one belongs to by birth. Here one sees that morality as such plays but a secondary part in the ultimate destiny of the believer. Some religions, Catholicism for instance, actually teach that devotion to ceremonial observances and orthodoxy are immeasurably superior to "good works" Catholicism holds that moral offences are trifling matters compared with any deviation from the faith taught by the Church. The average Catholic would attach more importance to not eating meat on a Friday or not attending Mass on a Sunday than to moral obligations of a serious nature. We see this also with the average Mussalman who is very particular about washing his fingers and toes before saying his prayers, about assuming the correct posture and position, while he would commit the most grievous offence the moment after he has said his prayers.

It is now generally admitted that religion has lost its hold on the Westerners, (that is to say the educated class and not the peasantry) and probably the thoughtless in India do not realize that it is precisely the preposterous claims of religion and the little influence it has on morality that have driven most intelligent and thoughtful people out of the churches. (Such is the case at any rate in Catholic countries). People have begun to seriously realize that all is not well with a religion which after 1900 years has utterly failed to regenerate Europe but on the contrary plunged us into a war unparalleled in history. Though a garrulous apologist may assure us that Christianity has never been properly

tried in Europe and that it is not the fault of the religion if it has failed to achieve what it was expected to do, and that it was not responsible for the Great War, there is no getting out it, whatever they may say in extenuation, that it is the grotesque supernaturalism of that religion, based on myths and fables, that no longer appeals to the educated there. This will explain why the Pope of Rome is now inclined to make pacts with some dangerous dictators and to resort to all sorts of spectacular show in order to revive as much as he can a dying creed, while he leaves the peasantry in ignorance and superstition believing that his strength lies with that class.

The teaching of morality must be based on more realistic foundation than the desire to satisfy the whims of capricious gods or the consolidation of vested interests. All men must learn before long that they must make this world (the only one, one is sure of) a better place to live in and worth living for. Man must give up the ideas of living to please, to worship imaginary gods in the clouds with the hope of earning eternal bliss there after death, however unworthy he may have been during his life-time in this world. Europe has realized this and this

explains why religion is played out there. Here, in India, many believe that the European attitude towards religion is due to sheer materialism, and that this country must not imitate Europe. This is pure nonsense based on the conceited belief that India is the land of mysticism. (Superstition would be the right word).

India will indeed remain mystical as long as her people remain ignorant and do not seriously consider the religious problems which affect their lives so much. On this point there is still a perfect intellectual apathy which is lamentable and which is responsible for a good deal of the troubles one comes across here. It is fortunate that a few highly intellectual Indians have begun to realize that the misfortunes of India are due to too much religion. There is no doubt that Prof. Gokhale met with a deserved defeat because some such men are fortunately among the Members of the Senate of the University of Bombay. Let us hope, for the good of India, that their number is increased rapidly all over so that before long this Great Country may fall in line with the others where religion no longer stands foremost in the lives of the people.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

MIXED MARRIAGES.

In dealing with the topic of mixed marriages, I know I am likely to tread on the corns of the orthodox of all communities. In a country where caste has reigned supreme and unquestioned for centuries, the prejudice against such marriages can well be understood though

one may not sympathise with it. Woman has been looked upon so much as a chattel, that the very idea of her straying out of the orbit of the influence of a long trammels arouses the wrath the superior male. This becomes all the more acute when a collection of males have

acquired a sense of collective ownership over the females under their control.

Those who want to look at the rather common growing phenomenon of mixed marriages in this country with a dispassionate eye will have to shed their prejudices. They will have to look into the causes and examine the result with the cold eye of the scientist.

Now, to come to any useful conclusion on the subject, we shall have to examine the marriage relation and its position in relation to society in general. We shall have to consider how far society may interfere for the general good a relation which is primarily individual. In this connection I hasten to add that, to my mind, marriage, involving companionship and sexual relations, is predominantly an individual affair. We are told that marriage is a social question in as much as it involves the progeny and also in as much as it must in general conform to the current notions of social well-being. Those who argue in this fashion forget that society is made up of living individuals and that any restrictions in the purely personal relations of these individuals which might lead either to repression or dissatisfaction in the component units cannot in the long run conduce to social happiness. People do marry and beget children but primarily they marry because of the biological and emotional attraction they hold for each other. Viewed from this angle, society has no right whatsoever in restricting its member regarding the choice of mates though it may impose certain obligations in case the marriage results in children.

Looking closely into the restrictions which have been imposed by various societies at different times we find that they divide themselves into two categories. Firstly, the restrictions are based

on real or imagined eugenic grounds like the restrictions against incest and consanguineous marriages. Secondly, we discover that the restrictions are imposed for the preservation of racial purity where the race of the community imposing the restrictions considers itself superior to others.

Now, that the second consideration is at the root of the objection against mixed marriages seems to be indisputable. In order to consider whether it is well founded apart from the sense of superiority of a particular community, we must ask ourselves if there are in the first place pure races as such, and secondly whether if there are, there are any biological objections to their intermixture. The answers to these questions must, I am afraid, in the interests of Truth be in the negative. The objection to mixed marriages in our country, although it originated in presumed race superiority of the victor over the vanquished later on, resolved itself into conformation to crystallised custom, for we find that the objection is valid equally to the so-called higher as well as the lower castes. A lower caste objects as strongly to a member of their community marrying any one from an admittedly higher caste. Now, unless you can show intrinsic differences between persons of one caste and another which indicates a strong biological incompatibility you cannot sustain your objection to mixed marriages except on grounds of prejudice. The human animal is so much alike in spite of outward differences of pigment, or the position of the eyes in the face or crinkled hair accompanied by a protruding lower jaw, that science has yet to discover such incompatibility. Therefore, on biological grounds the objection vanishes altogether.

As for eugenic grounds it is fairly established that endogamy leads to a degeneration of the stock and the smaller the stock the greater the danger, and most castes are small.

This being so, scientifically speaking, mixed marriages are to be welcomed. I make bold to say that with the breakdown of caste barriers as a result of a wider outlook, such marriages are bound to become more and more common even if nominally caste flourishes. Another factor which must be taken into consideration is the coming out of woman to take her place in society. Under the present circumstances if you permit men and women of different castes to see each other and meet socially you might count on some of them marrying each other, for usually such social relations are only possible between those in whom the caste sense has weakened if not vanished altogether. The factor making for mixed marriages is the cultural and educational factor. When small castes remained in seclusion they no doubt acquired some cultural idiosyncracies, but the spread of a standardised education has won them away. There is more in common between persons of different castes who have received such education than between them and the less fortunate individuals of their respective communities who have not had the benefit of such education.

The only remedy open to those who opposed mixed marriages is to tighten up

caste barriers, to put their women into purdah at least so far as other castes are concerned and to oppose a standardised education. If they can succeed in doing this they will succeed in stopping mixed marriages.*

There is one other question which remains to be considered. It is contended that such marriages are not happy. There is a great fallacy underlying this argument. It implies that the orthodox marriages are necessarily happy. To any student of the institution of marriage it is patent, that few marriages are ideally happy. I have within my acquaintance several friends who have contracted mixed marriages. I have not discovered on the average that they are more unhappy than the others. On the contrary, I have found they are more happy, because the union is generally the result of a strong attraction and is contracted in the teeth of fierce opposition. Of course the instances of unhappy mixed marriages become more easily known and therefore furnish the orthodox with a handle to denounce them for their own purposes. The causes of unhappy marriages must be sought in something fundamentally wrong with the very institution of marriage but with that we are not concerned here. For the rest, marriage is a gamble, and mixed marriages are no exception.

"P. T."

* The best way to preserve small communities like that of the Parsi, for instance, is to build in a secluded place a nice stud farm well stocked with chosen mates. "Pure blood" can thus be preserved.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

A printed copy of the letter to the New York "SUN" by Ivan Panin has been recently addressed to me from Southampton. Towards the close of the leaflet, it is claimed that several replies were printed in the Sun, 'but not a single answer.' The challenge crosses the seas to reach Indian Rationalism. The letter itself purports to be an answer to Mr. W. R. Laughlin's call for a 'champion of orthodoxy' to step into the arena of the "Sun" and give him some "facts". And "here are some facts" that purport to be "scientifically demonstrated". The facts are overwhelming in abundance.

In younger days, it was the schoolboy pastime to upset the Vedic Pundits by touching their cosmological belief. They repeat bulky volumes from the Vedas and the Upanishads from end to end, possibly without knowing the significance of one syllable. They perform the proud feat of inverse recitation. Some of them can give at short notice how many times a syllable or letter occurs in the whole or a section of their scriptures. Such confounding miracle-workers were they, that it was approaching 'inspiration' in their case as from an unseen power. The Vedas were the servants of their vocal organs.

Ivan Panin will also not fail to be struck with wonder by the metrical gymnastics of the poets of the Sanskrit language, if he only knew them. Entire verses (long *vrittas*) and chapters are composed under very severe restrictions. The use or omission of particular words, syllables, or letters, or their repetition for fixed number of times has no bearing upon the sense conveyed, or the truth or otherwise of

the idea contained. Such extraordinary skill in versification, or prose composition evokes little surprise in this country where the art of prodigious metrical restriction has crept even into latterday vernaculars in the provinces. Kavyas (poetical books) are found that avoid particular letters, their sounds, or the organs of their origin, e.g., dentals (teeth) gutturals (throat) labials (lips). Has the world produced poetical works whose recitation eschewed one or other of them? One can repeat Sanskrit or other Indian verses in which the nasal sounds alone are employed, without the lips meeting. Slokas (verses) are made to consist of a few, two three, or even one consonant with only a variation in its vowel-compound to make the sense. Be it remembered also, that the introduction of proper names in abundance assists the march of shackled composition.

For the information of Ivan Panin whose explorations into the forests of biblical arithmetic do not sound other than amateurish, it has to be recounted that the ancient, classical languages like Sanskrit wield dictionaries that put more than one meaning on every single breath or sound-syllable that ever escaped the human lips. The *Amara Nighantu* and the *Akshara Nighantu* (letter-dictionary) possesses marvellous possibilities for interpreting the most obtuse verbology.

As I am unaware of the Greek phonetic system, I shall not venture to meet the argument of Ivan Panin by pursuing the second among the three ways suggested in the leaflet, viz., by attempting to prove that his *numerics* are faulty, that what are called facts presented in

the letter are not 'facts'. In fact the sting of the leaflet is only in its tail. The last paragraph says: "For refuting the argument by the second method *nine* noted rationalists were respectfully but publicly invited to prove that the facts were not as stated. Three University Presidents, two theological professors, three divines representing different denominations, and the editor of a whilom religious, now secular magazine, comprised the nine. They could not disprove the facts, *but they have not yet withdrawn their frequent public attacks on the Bible as a book that does not tell truth.*" Nine noted rationalists? But, mark, their constitution? I wonder how theological professors and divines representing church-denominations may honestly be called by the oft-abused name of rationalists, and more, 'noted rationalists'. The "Sun" correspondent has reason to be mightily pleased when they could not disprove his facts, which proceed no whit beyond multiples of seven among arithmetical tables. I admit he is on firm ground there. But, what earthly connection (or otherwise a divine one) there may be between a stringently accurate system of numerics (of letters and words) in a literary production and the truth or otherwise of the conceptual content thereof, the inspired Ivan Panin does not mind disclosing. The present article may occupy seven columns in print, as it covered 7 typewritten pages, its commentary, fourteen pages, another book from the same hand is 147 pages, the initials in my name together with those of the University Degree are seven letters, as also the day in the week (Tuesday) when I begin to write this. What if all these are facts? What do these facts signify? To me, nothing.

To modes of thought like Ivan Panin's it should be impossible to construct "falsehood" in multiples of seven, and perhaps only multiples of nine. Or supposing that the numerics of scriptural verbology lends itself to calculation in terms of nine also will Ivan Paninism alter its judgment on the infallibility of the inspired content? And how on earth (or in the heaven, for that matter) is seven such a symbol of sanctified mystic preference? I am familiar with the Hindu tradition of the seven upper worlds (Urdhva Lokas) the seven nether underworlds (Adholokas), the seven seas, (oceans) seven sages (sapta maharishis) and hosts of other clusters of seven. But there also other basic figures, like the five organs of sense, five organs of conduct, five elements (panch bhutas) nine planets, nine islands (dvipas being continents) each of which groups has a tendency to accumulate to its categories from further associations. What has this fertile oriental faculty to do with the varacity of the biblical story? When theological professors and divines do not themselves withdraw the attacks on the bible (as a book that does not tell the truth) it is proof positive that the narrowest limits of human reason conspire for its overthrow. The very modest form of rationalism obliges even learned divines to reject the argument that because a literary production may be shown to have been an ingenious network of arithmetical wonders, the bag of its ideal content embodied the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The attractions of fiction and poetry could well be incorporated in structures more complex, marvellous, and attractive than the primitive multiples of the farfetched sevens.

To indicate in brief the process of the so called "Scientific demonstration" of the inspiration of the Scriptures, it is enough to give here one or two passages from the letter to the New York "SUN." It refers to the first part of the geneology of Jesus Christ (the first eleven verses of the New Treatment) which has a vocabulary of "49 words (7×7) of which 42 (6×7) are nouns and 7 are not nouns. Of the 42 nouns 35 (5×7) are proper names and 7 are common nouns. Of the 35 proper nouns ($28 = 4 \times 7$) 28 are male ancestors and seven are not."

It will sustain the humour better to append the paragraph following.

The 49 words of the vocabulary are distributed alphabetically thus :

"Words under the first five letters of the Greek Alphabet are 21 in number, or 3 sevens. Under the second five letters, 14 or 2 sevens. Again: these words have 266 letters, or 38 sevens. And these also are distributed alphabetically, not at random, but by sevens. Thus words under the first three letters have 84 letters, 12 sevens. Under the fourth letter, 7. Under the fifth and sixth, 21 or 3 sevens. Under the eighth, 70, or 10 sevens. Under the 10, 11, and 12th, 21 or 3 sevens. Under the thirteenth, 7. Under the fifteenth to the twenty-first, 49 or 7 sevens. Under the 22nd, 7. It is thus clear that this part of the geneology is constructed on an elaborate design of sevens." I do not grudge the absence of reference to words under the seventh, ninth, and fourteenth letters of the Greek alphabet altogether in the "elaborate design." Nor do I quarrel with the system of grouping or clubbing together, e.g., 1 to 3, 5 and 6, 10 to 12, 15 to 21, to yield the multiples somehow of seven. The grouping to-

gether by Ivan Panin is in itself an ingeniously elaborate design. But, I repeat, what if all these are facts? Such facts remained to be discovered to the world till 1933 A.D., itself not a multiple of seven (or any other factorial number) by Ivan Panin, by the special grace of the Lord.

There is another avenue into this complex forest of figures. Its course runs thus: "The Greeks had no figures, but used instead the letters of their alphabet. Their first letter stood for 1, their second for 2, &c. Every Greek word is thus an arithmetical sum obtained by adding the values of its letters. The vocabulary of the entire geneology contains 72 words. If we right its numeric value against each of these 72 words and add them, we obtain for their sum 42, 364, or 6,052 sevens; and these 6,052 sevens are distributed alphabetically, not at random, but by seven," Beyond suggesting that the 72 words are no multiple of seven, and many a total that did not lend itself to the seven-treatment had been wiped off the slate, before the alphabetical groupings are disclosed, it is needless to comment on the infatuation in the method, that pinned itself to the results. And the process thus goes on *ad infinitum et ad nauseum*.

Assuming that Mathew set himself about to perform this Sahasrakshara Avadhanam (the thousand lettered-feat)—as in India we frequently hear of Ashtavadhanam (eightfold feat) and Sathaghanta avadhanam (the hundred-pens' feat)—assuming that Mathew was an "unheard of literary mathematical artist unequaled and hardly even conceivable" does it prove his ingenuity, or the truth of the work of his art? What if the whole scheme is made of sevens? What is the guarantee that its veracity is not

compatible with sixes while the vocabulary is divisible by sevens? Has not astronomy, geology, paleontology, and many a branch of science demonstrated its genuineness to be at sixes and sevens alike? Ivan Panin cannot do better than summon Thomas Paine in his 'Age of Reason' before him to evaluate the facts bundled together in the bag whose septogonal network the former takes so great pains to follow. The geneology of Jesus differs in different books, Mathew, Mark, Luke &c as the comparative parallel tables prepared by Tom Paine 'scientifically demonstrate.' What becomes of the One Mind that gave divergent ancestry to the son of God? I do not marvel at the capacity of Mathew, Mark, Luke or any other Bible-writer, for really there is nothing in any of them to evoke wonder, but the genius that studiously summed up the 'facts' and gleaned instances favourable to its numeric thesis by a process of accepting the similars and dissimilars, presenting groups where individual facts go against it, sometimes ignoring the latter when they, even in combination, do not lend themselves to the theory, earns rich compliments for its imperviousness to modern thought and Higher Criticism. The industry expended in mechanical calculation could well be utilised with better talent and logic, more cogent, to arrive at a form of truth and system of "facts" higher than an addition of the numeric values of letters and words in the Greek Bible may ever yield.

There is another line of argument to establish Biblical Inspiration. "A second fact is still more important. Mathew uses just 140 words, 20 sevens, found nowhere else in the New Testament. How did he know that Mark, Luke, John, James, Peter, Jude, and Paul would not

use those words? Unless we assume the impossible hypothesis that he had an agreement with them to that effect, he must have had the whole of the New Testament before him when he wrote his book. *The Book of Mathew then, was written last.*" The fallacy of *Non Sequitar* is apparent. The impossible hypothesis of mutual agreement and having the rest of the N. T. before him are not the only two alternatives possible. Assuming that the user of the 140 words by Mathew and their non-user elsewhere was deliberate or designed, rather than a mere accident, it does not follow that Mathew should have written last. Later writers might have had no use for them, or might have even prohibited or avoided their use. No agreement to which Mathew was party need be assumed as the only alternative for his having the rest of the N.T. in hand when he wrote.

After this, the attempt to convince by the *Reductio ad absurdum* line of argument becomes enfeebled. "*Mathew surely wrote after Mark, and Mark equally surely wrote after Mathew.*" Also, "we have then no longer two great unheard of Mathematical Literati, but eight of them, *and each wrote after the other.*" Happily, the chronology of the authorship of the N. T. Gospels is now placed on firmer ground than the illogical assumptions of Ivan Panin ascribe to it.

The historicity of Jesus is a problem. Thanks to the copious literature produced by the late Right Hon'ble J. M. Robertson, much light is now thrown on that subject of obscure sanctity. Biblical Criticism has also discovered discrepancies as to the time of production of the various books in the N. T. Like the Vedas, these also are shown to have lent to the interpolater a free hand at forgery. It is

futile to expect currency in modern thought of the antediluvial positions assumed in the leaflet. The claim that 'One Mind supervised the Whole' is as audacious an assumption as that put forth by the Jews that they were 'the Elect' the Almighty God's chosen People. The New Testament is but the successor of the Old, the Bible. The absence of all reference to the latter by Ivan Panin is significant. Did not the One Mind that supervised N. T. supervise also the Old Bible? Was the world created in six days, six thousand years ago, the earth, the sun and the moon and the stars? Before the geneology of Jesus, goes the *Genesis* which is now jettisoned on all hands.

"Even if the facts be true (facts being merely collocations of verses and calculating the number), the arithmetic faultless, and the collocation of the numerics honest (if it is honesty to take in only such instances as are favourable, leaving out the rest), it does not follow that mere men could not have written (nay, did not in fact write) them without inspiration from above." The brackets are, of course, mine. Every poet and fiction-

writer has this *inspiration from above*, in abundance. On the other hand the humanity of the production is patent in its mythical history, emotional frailty and a false, unscientific, cosmology. Its ethic does not reach even the merely human level of a later time. Two thousand years of boasting had not brought on mankind the millenium of a sane sociology or peaceful economic order. The word of god from which the bulk of the creation, past and present, is excluded is proved to be an impotent human production, a bundle of unauthenticated documents, on which several obscure hands were at work at diverse periods of creation and fabrication. That is one *fact* above all the facts of cheap arithmetical manipulation.

The divine "inspiration of the scriptures" from above is not enhanced by the human ingenuity of Ivan Panin that deals in commodities like the numeric values of the letters in the Greek alphabet, while the world is disturbed over the displacement of the economic values of dearer things on the earth, *below*. *

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

* We admire the wonderful patience and industry of our learned contributor in analyzing the idiotic article of Ivan Panin so carefully.

ED. REASON.

SEEN THROUGH A SMOKED-GLASS.

Rahu meets Surya.

Judging from recent happenings, this planet of ours is not the only one to undergo troubled conditions; a belligerent atmosphere and unsettled circumstances are also visible among the gods. Only on the 21st of August, the monster Rahu nearly got Surya, the sun-god, and almost devoured him (as far as Bombay was concerned). In Moradabad and other places, the monster succeeded in eating Surya, whole—the fellow completely disappeared and creation was deprived of Surya the life-giver for the space of 2½ minutes—after which, if what I heard is reliable, Surya managed to wriggle out of Rahu's deadly grasp. By slow degrees, as slow as the operation of swallowing, Surya after fierce fighting ultimately freed himself and gave Rahu the slip. But Rahu, like the dogged John Bull, is not to be beaten and the chase has started all over again!

It is reliably predicted that Rahu will get Surya yet again; and Surya will do Rahu, the monster, in the eye! History also reports that this business of getting caught and slipping away was repeated and has been enacted many a time in the past. Old people, who have seen these strange things occur during their lifetime, are never tired of recalling tales of the misfortune that befell man on those particular days because Rahu, the monster got Surya, the life-giver!

There is one point which might as well be put down, i. e., that Surya, by himself, is as powerless against Rahu as Gandhi is against his guardians. But like Gandhi he can arouse public indignation; and he does. The public in India will never

consent to see Surya in Rahu's claws much less to sit inactive while Rahu makes a meal of Surya. They, the public, fast, pray, refrain from bathing, practice charity, clothe the needy, feed the hungry, observe a holiday, and even starve their children so that Surya may be free—no sacrifice is too great. Unlike Gandhi Surya invariably goes free and continues to shed light and radiate life upon this planet of ours; all through the sacrifice and foresight of our pious Hindus! In China too there is a general beating of gongs and a blowing of horns to scare Rahu.

Like many others in better circumstances, the beggars make a whack out of religion on this day. They howl out for charity so that Surya may go free! If you send a beggar away disappointed poor Surya! you only increase his anguish! The biggest misers loosen their purse strings, the money-lenders in their anxiety and confusion forget their lust for money, close their shops and sit listlessly on the steps. Everything loses its lustre; everything is dull and gloomy, except the beggars, full of life, their lungs bellowing out a hoarse demand for charity!

In Bombay and other places there is a section of the population that cannot appreciate the efforts of the Hindus to liberate god. This is not at all surprising. Some people are blind; other won't use their eyes; some have such a thick and horny conscience that nothing will frighten them. But they are all running the same risk. They court the displeasure of god and merit the misfortunes peculiar

to the day when this catastrophe befalls the life-giver, Surya. Punishments, if not meted out in this existence, are surely in store for them in the future—it will be their fault if they are not reborn in some baser form next time.

When Rahu comes up with Surya—this is the latest in connection with the two in Bombay—the air is vitiated. It is said that, according to science, the gastric juices cease to carry out their normal functions in view of which the enlightened Hindu observes a rigid fast. Prevention is better than cure and a practical man should never risk an intestinal complication if he can help it.

The holiday is of course the religious sequence to the fast; and the fear that misfortune may beset business. Uncertainty never encourages business and at these times uncertainty comes upon one as if from nowhere. When Surya so bright and cheerful is dim in despair who can hope in the darkness? Terrible hints are thrown out; stories of unaccountable and weird happenings to those who transact business are afoot. Worst of all, these curses fall on the children and include the family. The only argument is “It is not good!” “Baba, it is not good!” “It is not good to do this to-day. Do it to-morrow. Nothing will happen”. You have all the meaning of a death sentence in “It is not good!” Quiet but awe-inspiring words those... ..“It is not good!” For instance Satta bets are unprofitable and neither laid nor taken; both the receiver and the bettor are in the same state of panic.

The motive for Rahu’s animosity against Surya is not very clear; but nothing is very clear about the gods. They are always in the clouds! It is

believed in some circles that Rahu occasionally suffers from rabies and in his boisterous moments turns his violence against gentle Surya. In this connection Rahu is never mentioned alone but always with Kitto—probably his first cousin! What the other fellow is doing just now is very uncertain. Possibly he is watching Rahu’s game and enjoying it!

In other parts—and this is between us two only—it is whispered that Surya winked at Rahu’s favourite out of pure mischief; this is quite possible considering that our gods are very romantic and sometimes foolish. It was of course scandalous of Surya. He ought to have behaved himself—but that is strictly between us two! However a god is a god and if a god cannot do what he chooses he is no god. Surya did exactly what he liked—that is why he is a god!

It is noteworthy that the “Giran” of the 21st August, by which is meant the tussle between Surya and Rahu began at the particular moment stressed in the papers a week before the event and completed just as was published—another proof that the gods are posted with our doings. Surya and Rahu both fought out the duel to perfect time and everybody watched them!

It is generally accepted that since the dim distant past there has been a mass of evidence piled up about Rahu and Surya. This evidence hovers like a cloud. It is dark and uncertain and therefore frightful. It has come down through the ages from mother to daughter to our day, and respectfully accepted by the sons. It says Rahu and Surya ARE in the sky; it says that all normal life MUST cease till Surya’s welfare is ensured. Who dare defy it?

Looking back into the past, reflecting on the present and thinking of the future it is apparent that Rahu the monster and Surya the life-giver are at logger heads—because it is so; that man must pray and live in fear of misfortune on

the day they come to grips—because it has always been so; and the Hindoo must fast because of late his spleen dries up! And all this is because it has been so! And that's—that!

K. ROBERT ALMEIDA.

EDUCATION AND RELIGION.

We congratulate the Senate on its rejection of the proposition for imparting religious education in affiliated colleges. The proposition was based on false premises, as it stated that, since "religion has always served as a basis of morality amongst all nations, a religious appeal on a very broad basis would be a very potent means of reforming the national character, and also of help in solving other national problems." There could not be a greater delusion than this. The present day political ills of India are more or less due to the mixing of religion with politics. If we had left religion severely alone and considered politics purely from the materialistic point of view we should not have seen the almost sanguinary struggle for power that we see in the country to-day, between the different communities. When people leave their religious views behind them and come to discuss politics as politics, there is a reasonable possibility of reaching an agreement otherwise the mere hope is almost non-existent.

If we eschew religion from our politics, there can be no communal problem. When every one is an Indian in politics and not a Hindu or a Muslim or a Parsi or a Christian, there is nothing to fight about between them, for the interests of one community will be the interests of the other. We want less religion, not more, in our national affairs.

It is a paradox that religion is not a basis of morality amongst nations or individuals though morality is the basis of religion. Most of the countries in the world are very religious, but that has not prevented them from killing each other and carrying on all kinds of false propaganda. Take the case of Germany or Italy of to-day. The Nazis have been committing all their atrocities with the tacit approval of the Pope, who has not only formed an alliance with them, but sanctified their deeds. The Pope thinks that Mussolini is a "good man" and there is a close pact between the two. Germany's state religion, strangely enough, is, of course, Protestant. But we are not singling out any particular religion.

The same is the case with every religion more or less. When the Great War began, the priests of every country forgot their teachings, cursed their enemies and prayed to God for their own victory, and then preyed on each other. Victory, however, went to the big battallions in the end. In India, religions have not only become aggressive but unscrupulous in their treatment of their opponents. What we really want the University to undertake is the inculcation of higher human ethics, and charity for one another. Religions unfortunately are divorced from these finer quantities and that is why we cannot and do not judge our opponents

with that amount of charity and fellow-feeling which is urgently required, if this country is to rise above strife and bloodshed.

The last communal riots in Bombay, when hundreds were killed and thousands maimed, were begun not because there was less religion, but more. It may be argued that these communalists pervert religion for their own ends. But the masses cannot discriminate and are guid-

ed by bigots, who prostitute religion for their selfish purposes. We must entirely, if regretfully, deny that religious people are moral. On the other hand people may be, and are, moral, and at the same time irreligious. That however, is academic. The reality is that so long as persistent efforts are made to turn students into religious zealots and bigots through colleges and Universities, they must be condemned by all thinking, moral men.

[We reproduce the above article from the "Bombay Chronicle" of the 18th August last as it reflects our own opinion on the question of religious teaching in Schools and Colleges :—*Ed. Reason.*]

ON PRAYER.

Prayer, devotion, bhakti—these are such vague and abstract terms that I am not ashamed to confess my inability to define them. What I attempt in the following paragraphs is only a lay man's notion and practice of prayer and how far it is in harmony with reason and commonsense.

We—I mean all idolaters—pray in front of a symbol, say, an idol or a picture or some such material representation of a non-material God. It is maintained in defence of idolatry that the idol enables us to visualise God better than by concentrating on vacuity. This defence of idolatry is perfectly sound in theory, but in practice this is very often lost sight of. A simple illustration will bear out my contention. If, as is maintained, the idol in a Hindu temple or a Roman Catholic church is simply an aid to visualisation, how is it that one temple or one church is regarded as more holy than another and the idol enshrined in it more powerful? I can understand that one

temple is better built, has a bigger idol, commands more wealth, puts on a better show and attracts a bigger crowd than another. But it passes comprehension how such a temple becomes more holy and its idol more powerful in curing maladies, granting boons, and imposing penalties.

More ridiculous are to me the endless ceremonials through which the idol-God passes from morn to eve. He wakes up with the break of day, has his morning ablutions and delicious breakfast. A brief interval follows before the bathing hour arrives. At the appointed hour he takes his bath, not in ordinary water, but in rose water, coconut-juice, lime-juice and cow's milk. Dinner follows with cooked rice, milk, fruits, sugar, honey and many other sweets that the wit of man has devised and his efforts procured. He has his *pansupari* and retires for a nap. With the emergence of dusk, he is treated to his supper and ceremoniously conveyed to

bed amidst beating of drums and chanting of mantras. His consort receives her godly mate and shares with him her nightly bed. But occasions are not wanting when the consort is peevish and the door of her chamber is banged at his face. Occasions are also not wanting when he goes astray from the path of virtue and morality and falls into the snare of heavenly concubines. Indeed, the tastes of idol-Gods are magnificently varied and highly cultivated. One God lusts after women, another after wine, a third after theft, a fourth after murder and man-slaughter. Human stupidity cannot go farther!

Where does all this trumpery and ceremony lead to? Is there any sense in all these proceedings, and if there be, are these ceremonials indispensable to purification of the heart and concentration of thought? The protagonists of idolatry answer in the affirmative. But can this answer pass muster? I greatly doubt if it can. If, as is contended, an idol is only a concrete representation meant to aid human imagination, where is the need for investing that humble stone with all the paraphernalia, that is supposed to belong to God? Will rational man be so irrational as to spend his time, energy, and wealth on puppet idols if he really believes them to be so? The truth is there is always that lurking and sometimes overt belief that the idol is not a mere representation of God, but God Himself. As a matter of fact, popular belief among the Hindus has advanced so far in this direction as to find an explanation for the evolution of idol into God—an evolution about which Darwin was absolutely in the dark! It is held that by repeated pujas and mantras offered at the feet of the idol, it slowly but surely develops *ugram* and attains a

power and *thejas* not vouchsafed to the ordinary stone. With the lapse of time and with the aid of more mantras—and you may have them in myriads provided dakshinas are forthcoming—the idol gradually imbibes Godhood and at last blooms forth as a full-blown God. In this respect, Mohammedanism and Protestantism have a much-needed lesson to teach to a superstitious world, namely, that man, if he is bent upon praying, may do so without material props.

If one can pray without idols, how is he to pray? Jesus Christ gives you the answer. Says he:

“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you they have their reward.”

“But thou when thou prayest, enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” (Matthew, chapter 6).

But what is going on in practice? You have got temples, churches, mosques, pagodas and synagogues where people congregate and while professing to pray, fail to develop the *sine qua non* of all prayer, the power to concentrate one's mind; for it would be impossible to fix one's thought on anything amidst the crowd and confusion. Congregational prayer seems to be the very antithesis of Christ's idea of prayer, and yet it is the order of the day, not only in the non-Christian world, but in Christendom itself.

Prayer, they say, is based on mental concentration and is even identical with

concentration on God. But how to concentrate our thoughts on God while we see Him not and hear Him not? We cannot go on repeating "God, God, God" for all eternity. Even the man with the most assinine patience will get bored with such a repetition. Even supposing that such assininely patient individuals are to be found on this earth—surely not many can be found—where is the guarantee that while their tongues are wagging to produce the name of God, their hearts are not wandering in the realms of Satan? It is to avoid this difficulty and to make prayer more interesting and uniform that set prayers are imposed by almost all religions. A prescribed passage is repeated once, twice or thrice everyday with such great tenacity, regularity and monotony that it becomes an empty formality ere the praying individual makes any considerable progress in this practice.

After all, is prayer an indispensable part of religion? Is it necessary for

leading a good, honest and moral life which is the goal aimed at by all religions? My answer is an emphatic "No." If prayer consists in asking something of God, it is selfish; if it does not consist in asking anything of God, it is useless. Prayer consists, and must consist, in asking something of God or in not asking anything of Him. Therefore, prayer is either selfish or useless.

My own belief is that we may have a most excellent and least cumbersome religion divested of God and prayer. Call it mere morality or rank Agnosticism, if you will, but the fact remains that it serves the purpose and serves it least spectacularly and most economically. It does not deny God, but only ignores Him, for the simple reason that God and worship of Him become unnecessary and meaningless make-shifts under such a dispensation. A religion without a God is a practical proposition to-day, demanding the attention and talents of all thinking individuals.

S. V. VENKATARAMANAN.

RELIGIOUS MORALS.

The following extracts from Marathi periodicals will go a long way to prove the futility of the claim that religion is a sound basis for morals or that it leads to moral conduct.

"In the Ahmednagar district, there is a sacrosanct Sadhu known as Upasani Maharaj. I hear that some of his disciples have offered him their wives and that he has given them shelter. An old graduate teacher from Akola offered him his daughter, of about eighteen, a few months back and the Maharaj married her to the idol of Balkrishna. At present she is practically a prisoner there. She is not

allowed to go home and has a vow of silence imposed on her. On the last Shivaratra day the Maharaj proposed to bestow a special favour on her, by which absolution was to be secured to seven preceding and seven succeeding generations, and the father was foolish enough to issue invitations to his friends and relatives for the auspicious occasion. Of course, they did not attend, as they suspected that this special favour was nothing else than a Garbhadhana (consummation of marriage) ceremony, the Maharaj being the representative of the god to whom she was married. This

Maharaj is 60 years old and it is rather strange that he accepts people's daughters and wives as offerings, for which there is no religious sanction. Practically naked, the Maharaj sits on a carpet or lolls on a bed barely two feet high. Night and day, these offered women attend on him. Is this Spiritualism, or contemplation of the Supreme, or Raja-yoga, or mere knavery? I am inclined to believe the last. These rascals can do what they like simply because people do not care to take aggressive measures against them. If a modern educated man argues with them, they jeer at him as an atheist. If a learned Shastri attacks him, he pretends that you must forget all learning if you want to mix with the masses. Of course when some one retorted that you must acquire learning first before you can forget it, the Sadhu could not reply.

There was also a Parsi Sadhu called Meher Baba. He used to collect children of 10 to 12 round him and get them to shout "Meher Baba, Meher Baba" which apparently would lead to absolution. These people's spiritualism is very wordly indeed and consists of living at the expense of fools.

(*Mahadeoshastri Divekar*).

* * * *

"There" was one Pachlegaonkar who was also called Maharaj and lauded to the skies. It was said that he could cure snake-bite by an incantation, and that he could even do it by telegraph or telephone. There is plenty of room in the Hindu religion for all kinds of cheats living on the gullibility of the public on the strength of pretended occult powers. Recently an incident at Karad proved these occult powers to be false coin. He repeated a Mantra for a victim of snake-

bite and said he would be cured. The man however took it into his head to die and damn the Sadhu for ever.

It has already been reported in the papers how a Sadhu pretended to be able to transform one rupee into several rupees and cheated quite a number of people before he thought it fit to commit suicide at the prospect of going to jail for his exploits.

(*Vijayi Maratha, Poona.*)

* * *

Some time back a performance of "walking on fire" was given in Poona, which was advertised to be due to occult powers and which was duplicated later by some of the spectators without any pretence to occult powers.

In spite of innumerable exposures of the tricks and rascalities of so-called Sadhus, people are so steeped in religion that they are always willing to be duped again. One curious thing about the disciples of Sadhus is that they all consider their own particular Sadhu to be genuine, while they are quite willing to admit that the rest are imposters! My paragraph on Sai-Baba brought me a number of letters from his followers who insisted that other Sadhus may be cheats, but not Sai-Baba.

The "Dina-bandhu" of Poona demands that it should be made a crime for any able-bodied man to beg in the name of religion. Of course, being an advocate of equal rights for women, I would also include them in the law, but apart from genuinely religious people, there are so many pseudo-religious ones everywhere that it would be difficult to get such a law passed.

R. D. KARVE.

THE STORY OF THE DISCONCERTING COMET.

The sudden appearance of a comet in the nocturnal sky arouses little excitement to-day. For we live in an age when the advent of a comet is predicted by the astronomer, when the paths comets follow have been determined, and when their innocent nature has been fully established. It is therefore extremely difficult to realize the terror, frequently rising to a panic, into which the entire population of Christian Europe was for centuries reduced by the spectacle of late and menacing comet in the heavens.

Although the ancient Chaldean astrologers regarded comets as purely natural phenomena, in other parts of the world these wandering lights were feared as heavenly messengers of misfortune. The cultured Mediterranean races inherited a vast sum of superstition from their savage and barbarous ancestors. Comets and eclipses they thought ominous to mankind. The appearance of a new star, or a meteoric display, was on the other hand regarded as auspicious inasmuch as it announced the nativity of divinities, sages, warriors or kings. A star heralded the births of Christ and Buddha, and is said to have presaged that of Moses. The coming of Abraham among the Jews, and the advent of the great and wise in Greece and Rome, were proclaimed by celestial lights.

Naturally such signs and wonders became part of the creed of Christendom. In truth they probably assumed a more sinister aspect when they were interpreted by the Church as God's warnings to wayward men of impending punishment. And the belief that every comet is a dangerous firebrand flung into the

sky by an infuriated deity to summon mankind to prayer and repentance was taught by the primitive Christians and remained orthodox until quite recent generations. Even when the discoveries of science had plainly disproved this doctrine, the unprogressive pious could always appeal to the authority of the Church and the evidences contained in the Scriptures.

It is noteworthy that teachers so diverse as Origen, the Venerable Bede, John of Damascus and the great St. Thomas Aquinas himself, unhesitatingly asserted the malevolent meaning of heavenly meanderers. A tailed comet in the night sky foreboded evil in many diverse ways. Disastrous campaigns, the downfall of States, plagues and famines were all portended by the arrival of a comet.

Direful superstition such as this led to various evils. The belief that men's lives were at the mercy of baleful stars tended to enervate the will, to inspire and sustain fanaticism, and to strengthen the despotism of Church and State. Stagnation characterized the entire period embraced by the Middle Ages. As a standard authority, Dr. A. D. White avers: "At the appearance of a comet we constantly see all Christendom, from Pope to peasant, instead of striving to avoid war by wise statesmanship, instead of striving to avert pestilence by observation and reason, instead of striving to avert famine by skilful economy, whining before fetishes, trying to bribe them to remove these signs of God's wrath, and planning this supposed wrath of God upon misbelievers."

In days when the births of pontiffs, princes, and other men of consequence were heralded by the appearance of splendid stars, and when their deaths were forecasted by comets their supreme importance was deeply impressed on the minds of the motley multitude. The seats of authority, both spiritual and temporal, were thus strengthened, and the arrogance of kings and priests rose to inordinate heights. Again, so far did this astral delusion minister to the vanity of autocratic rulers that they were apt to present themselves on their semi-divinity, and to express their satisfaction that their deaths were of such universal importance as to call forth comets in the sky. Shakespeare immortalized this sentiment in *Julius Caesar* in the lines:—

“When beggars die, there are no comets seen ;

The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.”

In his *Norman Conquest*, Freeman has presented a realistic picture of the panic inspired by the terrible comet which watched over the death-bed of the pious and incapable Edward the Confessor, and presages the disastrous Battle of Hastings when Harold, the last of the Saxon princes, was slain.

Throughout the Middle Ages Christendom was periodically reduced to a state of terror by the cometary harbingers of misfortune or death that hung manacled in the heavens. So late indeed as 1456 when the Moslem Turk captured the Eastern Capital of Christianity, popular fear of cometary influences continued unabated. A comet was then visible in the sky, and it was believed that this presaged the complete triumph of the insolent Moslem. An able administrator, the Pope Calixtus III., neverthe-

less appears to have participated in the superstitions of the time. For, he was so deeply alarmed that he solemnly “decreed several days of prayer for the averting of the wrath of God, that whatever calamity impended might be turned from the Christians and against the Turks.” Then likewise was instituted the mid-day Angelus which summons pious believers to petition against the powers of Satan. The Pope is said to have officially excommunicated the comet by means of a papal bull. A litany also contained the plea, “From the Turk and the comet, good Lord deliver us.” Yet, despite the World War, with all its changing consequences, the Turks still retain possession of Constantinople, while the terrible comet since known as Halley’s has been completely disarmed by the researches of science; its path through space has been determined; and its reappearance calmly awaited every seventy-five years.

Catholic apologists have endeavoured to discredit the story of Pope Calixtus and the comet. But it is accepted as truth by the leading historians of astronomy. The chief authority, however, is Platina the contemporary annalist who recorded the events not only at the time, but also on the spot. As Dr. White conclusively states, “the authority of Platina, who was not only in Rome at the time, but when he wrote his history, archivist to the Vatican, is final as to the Pope’s attitude. Platina’s authority was never questioned until modern science had changed the ideas of the world.”

The belief in the supernatural character of comets long survived the Reformation and Renaissance. Strype, Latimer, and many other Anglican divines furnish proof of this in England, as does John

Howe, the celebrated seventeenth century Dissenter. Howe poured scorn on the scientific interpretation of comets, and asserted their godly nature, inasmuch as they were portents to a sinful and backsliding generation.

In Scotland the Reformers zealously espoused the theological teaching. Blunt John Knox regarded comets as tokens of the Almighty's anger, and even after scientists had penetrated the secrets of cometary phenomena, the Scottish Church in 1680 proclaimed that heavenly lights were "prodigies of great judgment on these lands for our sins, for never was the Lord more provoked by a people."

But the astronomical discoveries of Tycho Brahe and Kepler were steadily undermining popular superstition. Burton in his fascinating *Anatomy of Melancholy* notes their influence upon intellectual opinion. Sir Thomas Browne again, admitted that the evils attributed to malign stars had been exaggerated "since it is found that many of them are above the moon." Yet in 1632 a scientist, Ralph Thoresby, a Fellow of the recently formed Royal Society, writing in deep distress, while acknowledging the natural causation of comets, surmised that God

might send them as warnings of impending calamity. Yet, at this very moment, Halley was conducting those epoch-making researches that were destined to liberate civilized Europe from the anxieties which had so continuously saddened the world.

It is probable that the Teutonic countries were those in which the cometary mania obtained its firmest hold. Central Europe was for centuries the stronghold of witches and wizards, and was ever a terror-stricken region in seasons of cometary manifestations. Small wonder then that their sinister character was taken for granted by the Protestant leaders. Thus Luther in an Advent sermon asserts that, "The heathen write that the comet may arise from natural causes, but God creates not one that does not foretoken a sure calamity." In another mood Luther traces them to Satanic agency and denounces them as "harlot stars."

Melanchthon, Zwingli, and other theologians mention comets as God's evil messengers, while Lavater cited Scripture to prove that comets are tokens of death and disaster to the human race.

T. F. PALMER.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hon'y. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

CAUSALITY IN MODERN SCIENCE AND INDIAN PHILOSOPHY.

(Submitted to the Indian Philosophical Congress, Ninth Session, Poona, 1933.)

Today, science in the West supplies a sense of security to the Vedanta and the other Darshanas. While it is true that the progress of human thought has been 'through Metaphysics to Physics' the reverse process obtains as well elevating the mechanical sciences to misty pedestals of infinite intangibles. Einstein,

Planck, Heisenberg, Bohr, and Exner are some among the scientists that initiated the doctrine of indeterminacy into regions above experiment, though Exner would restrict its operation to sub-microphysical phenomena like the behaviour of individual electrons, conceding to group-results what has been called

statistical determination following the strict mechanical law of causation. I outlined the various view-points in examining the bearing of Modern Physics upon Theism (The Incidence of Micro-physical Indeterminism, REASON Feb. 1933, pp. 6-13 & March 1933 pp. 5-8).

As indeterminacy involves the denial of the causality-principle, which is the basis of science, the withdrawal of their support by Einstein and Planck causes little surprise. The Law of Relativity, and the Quantum Theory of light worked out by the mathematician and the physicist do not injure life in the scientific world of Europe. Conservative England continues to retain the repercussions and tremors of the accidental earthquake received from the Continent, long after Einstein declared that "Indeterminism is quite an illogical concept." The religious predilections of Prof. Eddington and Sir James colour their work. The former is a Quaker reared in the profound belief in the authority of 'inner light' with a 'religious sense' which is elevated even to the 'religion instinct' in all matters excepting his own special field, astronomy, where his scientific sense 'warns theologians not to say any longer that the heavens proclaim the glory of God.'

His predecessors, Gallileo, Kepler and Newton detected certain laws governing bodies, and applauded the intelligence of the cosmic legislator. That was the age when God was visualised in the apparent harmonies in the universe. Natural laws were then the venue for divine operation. "Darwin himself went so far as to maintain most distinctly that his system of nature required a creator who breathed life into it in the beginning."

(Max Muller: Six Systems: p. 326) That this is the root of the god-idea is borne out by historians of philosophy. "The gods of the Vello and indirectly of all the Aryan people were the agents postulated behind the great phenomena of nature. This was the beginning of philosophy, the first application of the law of Causality, and in it we have to recognise the only true solution of Indo-European mythology and likewise of Aryan Philosophy." (Six Systems, P36).

As science advanced natural explanations for these phenomena and traced their antecedent history, the postulate of theistic direction was excluded on the principle of economy of thought, viz., nothing that is unnecessary ought to be assumed. If the existence of God is inferred from the order of nature, we are compelled to find some feature which cannot be understood except by postulating supreme intelligence. If for that purposes we fasten upon some obscure phenomenon like embryonic development or electronic behaviour, we put theism in acute rivalry with science and make it vitally dependent on the ignorance of science 'which is apt to prove temporary.' Prof. Eddington occupies this position. The strong astronomer warns against basing religion on scientific discoveries as in his field he feels no need to call in aid any extraneous agency. In the microcosmic range, according to him, human wit is master, while in the microcosm of electronic behaviour the failure to detect uniformity in the deflection of these minute electrical charges caused by the quanta of light or photons, makes him suspect that free-will extends to the routine processes of inorganic nature. The weakness of this position was pointed out by Prof. Levy, in his

"Universe of Science," Scientific investigation is possible only through isolating the phenomena under study from the rest of its environment. Experiments do not succeed unless performed under conditions neutral to the environment. If the apparatus employed is not sufficiently insulated to prevent all absorption or diversion of the subject-matter, experiments fail. On this footing, August Comte objected to introspection as a method for psychological study, since mental processes are themselves modified during their observation. But experience testifies to the possibility of examining mental isolates independently, though within limits. Thus, the limits of experiment are not an absolute bar to progress. If today science is not able to reach an electronic isolate without reacting upon light-quanta, it is no more than a warning that subtler methods are yet to be devised before it can pronounce on its character. It does not warrant the scrapping of the entire machinery of science built upon the bedrock of causality, nor an assumption of free-willist electrons. Einstein himself has condemned this tendency in unmistakable terms. To find in the alleged spontaneous jumps of electrons from one orbit to another evidence of their own volitions being independent of the law of causation is characterised by Einstein as being 'not merely nonsense, but objectionable nonsense.' (*Literary Guide, London, August, 1933, p. 147.*)

* * *

While theism assures itself that the reign of law in the universe is the great proof of cosmic intelligence, Sir Arthur Eddington comes along with a supposed discovery that there is no reign of law, no rigorous sequence of cause and

effect. He sees God in chance, not in order, in accident not in design, in indeterminacy rather than determinism. When he deduces the freedom of the human will from electronic misbehaviour in the sense of the unpredictability of the direction of their movement, we are reminded of the type of argument in Gotama's Nyaya Sutras, IV, 19-21. The doctrine of Karman is the religious application of causality. The hypothesis of Isvera in the Vedic Darshana becomes superfluous if every act of man produce the corresponding effect. But "the actions of men do not always produce an effect. Good actions do not always produce good results, nor bad actions, bad results, as they ought if every act continued to act. Hence there must be another power that modifies the continuing acting of acts, and that can be Isvera only." (M. M. Six Systems, p424) Thus Isvera is rather the governor than the maker of the world, under whose superintendence every act of man invariably produces its result. It is the need to account for the failure of Karman that called forth Isvera in Gotama Nyaya, distinct from the argument in Mimamsa.

Those that rely on fortuitous effects to sustain the Nirisveravada (non-existence of God) find themselves robbed of their weapon when theists have it both-ways by seeing God in causation as also in its absence. Badarayana in the Vedanta Sutras (III, 2, 38) makes Brahman responsible directly or indirectly for the rewards of all works. This is based upon Brih. Up. IV, 4, 24, wherein the Lord is said to be the agent by whom all actions are requited. The causal principle is the working of the divine law in Uttara Mimamsa or Vedanta. But the school

that maintains the identity of cause and effect, (Karyakaranabheda) by denying reality to a second entity beside Brahman, has no interest in Karman more than nominal or illusory. Through Avidya, separateness as cause and effect, action and its fruit, is perceived. Granting (Vyavahartham) practically, that one is born deaf, dumb or blind, it is not by reason of divine caprice, but in virtue of the law of Karman, which is the handy solution of the alleged injustice of God. He is above these dualisms of cause and effect, good and evil. The rigorous monism of Sankara pulverised causality into Maya, the Avidya to be shaken off by real knowledge. The second branch of Vedanta shooting through Bodhayana and developed by Ramanuja gives a humaner colour. Its personal God Vishnu is the last cause of all that is. He is qualified by compassion or love in contrast with the "icy self-sufficiency" ascribed to Brahman. Divine attributes (Kalyana Gunas) Sakti, Tejas, intelligence, power, mercy and love on the Saguna plane (with qualities) have place for Karman, yet help to temper the rigours of causal justice with mercy. In Visishtadvaita, we meet the vedantic analogue of the double-stringed argument of Gotama. God is law, its exception, even its denial.

In the Purva-Mimamsa, God is entirely dissociated from the rewards and punishments for the acts of men. A rigorous inexorable Karman produces its results, and exculpates the Lord entirely from the cruelty injustice, or partiality. "For the moral government of the world, according to Gaimini "no Lord is wanted." (M. M. Six Systems, p211). The works themselves produce their fruit, and where the fruit does not appear at once, Apurave, a super-sensuous

principle produce fruit later. Einstein's relativity makes time the fourth dimension of the space-time continuum; hence, the production of fruit later may be equated to "action at distance" as the spatial analogue in modern science of the temporal Apurva of the Mimamsakas. "Gaimini would not make the Lord responsible for the injustice that seems to prevail in the world and hence reduced everything to cause and effect and saw in the inequalities of the world the natural result of the continued action of good or evil acts. This surely was not atheism, rather was it an attempt to clear the Lord from those charges of cruelty or undue partiality which have so often been brought against Him. It was but another attempt at justifying the wisdom of God" (ibid). In clearing God of the taint of injustice Gaimini is apparently more loyal than the king, more divine than God.

Causality is the shield in God's armoury that prevents attacks against His injustice reaching His Person. Withal, it is a thing apart, an instrument different from one who handles it.

But it would be derogatory to omnipotence to be unable to breakaway from Karma. It would restrict omnipresence if it were withdrawn from where the causal principle is apparently set all naught. While lay religionists sing the Lord's praise to the heavens that their harmonies proclaim His glory scientific religionists like Eddington who perceive the winding paths of astral evolution in all its imperfections search for Him elsewhere than in law order, progress or design. (cf. Intimations on Comparativism, publd, REASON, Bombay, May, 1933).

In denying causality, the new science revives Hume's Nihilism. Hume does not infer cause-effect relation from invariable succession. Karl Pearson in his "Grammar of Science" makes it clearer. These 'infidel' teachings are taken over as supports for religion by scientists who set their sails to capricious winds of 'indeterminacy'. Even Kapila, the Samkhya atheist condemns nihilism. "For in Sutra I, 4, 1, he says 'if it were only priority, there would be no law or hold (Niyama) between cause and effect.' " (M. M. Six Systems, p159). His agreement with Vyasa that cause and effect are identical is only superficial. While the latter wipes out the difference as illusion (Maya) the Samkhya system holds that effects pre-exist in causes which are never destroyed but rendered invisible only. As "SAT" (reality) is assured by Kapila to the Karya (effect) in the Karana-Karya (cause & effect) relation, his doctrine is named Sat-Karyavada. This is the point of contact between Vedanta and Samkhya, where the Nyaya and Viseshika schools differ with them both. These latter as also Buddhism take to the opposites, the Asat-Karyavada.

Samkhya endows nature, (Prakriti) with reality, being looked upon by Purusha (self) through Aviveka (want of discrimination). Viveka (discrimination) enables the self to become independent, Kaivalya (lit. aloneness) apart from the dancing girl Prakriti (Karikas, 59-62) but that is not the annihilation of nature which persists to entangle other purushas (M. M. Six Sys. pp 295 & 299) for there is a plurality of them. The qualities (Satva, Rajas, Tamas) inhere in nature though Aviveka foists them on the self. And a Avyakta Prakriti is one and one only, the identity of cause and

effect is established, being the modifications of nature, the effect in all reality pre-existing in the cause. While Samkara argues (II, 1, 20) from the identity of cause and effect, its religious application that the world as the effect of Brahman is not different from it.

Though Kapila mentions eight prakrities, they are the Karya modifications of the undeveloped primary Karana, and in turn serve as causes. Prakriti evolves Vikaras in its parinama (evolution). This parinama Vada (theory of evolution) is taken into the compound of the Vedanta by Ramanuja whose Visthahtadvaita differs from the Vivartavada (illusion doctrine) of Sankara. (M. M. Six Sys. p. 81) "There is always something on which Nivarta (illusion) is at work and which cannot be deprived of its reality" (Ibid, p. 185) According to Max Muller even Badarayana, whose Sutras both Sankara and Ramanuja take as their text, may have held to Parinama (evolution) rather than Vivarta (illusion) doctrine. "This view of the universe as the development of Brahman was possibly the original view taken by Badarayana, and it was clearly that of Ramanuja and his followers who explain the world as an evolution (Parinama). But this was not Sankara's theory. He accepts the two facts that the world is changing and unreal, and yet that the real cause of it, that is, Brahman is incapable of change." (M. M. Six Sys p. 280) The fallacy underlying is exposed by Kapila's argument: "Every proof in support of an Isvara as a maker or lord, a Sat-kara, would break down. For, if he were supposed to be above all variance and free, he could not have willed to create the world. If he were not so, he would be distracted and deluded and unfit for the supreme task of

an Isvera." (M. M. Six Sys p. 328). In dealing with Brahman as evolving (Parinama) into world's goods Ramanuja brought Him down not only into conformity with the Samkya and Yoga teaching but with the discoveries of science in the West. But Kapila's views on causality are of peculiar interest in that he included among the Bandhas, bondages, or determinations, not only those resulting from nature, and its modifications, (the Prakriti, and Vikara Bandhas) but that which results from superstition or belief in the supernatural, the Dakshina Bandha (gifts to priest in ritual and sacrifice. From Dakshina (fee) the priestly class is named Dakshinias. Gifts are made by those who are overcome by passion, delusion and misconception. It is an index of an important limitation, bondage or Bandha, on man whom Kipling defined as "an imperfectly denatured animal intermittently subject to the unpredictable reactions of an unlocated spiritual area." "That this feeling of a priest should have been considered one of the three bondages shows that the followers of Kapila were above superstition and looked upon sacrifice and priestcraft as hindrances rather than as helps to true freedom and Moksha of the spirit" (M. M. Six Systems, pp. 272, 273) This contrasts from the tolerance of Samkara to ritual Vyavahartham, from Ramanuja, and also from Gaimini who preferred ritual to knowledge. But the nearest point of contact between the science of evolution and Kapila is the negation by the latter that Purusha (self) is the maker or agent. He is reflected in the moving mirror of nature whose emanations are operated by its Gunas (qualities). But the self deluded by Ahamkara (egoism) imagines that he is the operator (Cf. Bhagavad Gita III, 27)

Kapila's Purusha remains neutral or non active, though in him we do not yet see the bio-chemical product of modern science. The Samkhya Sutras expressly declare that the reward of every work done does not depend on any ruler of the world. The works themselves are working on for ever more." (Six Sys M. M. p. 330) "If it were otherwise we should have to ascribe the creation of the world with all its suffering to a Lord who is nevertheless supposed to be loving and gracious." This is the same argument put forth by Gaimini, whose Purva Mimamsa glorifies works (ritual and sacrifice) before everything.

Nor does the expedient of the Yoga-Patanjalas that super-imposed an Audi-Purusha (first self) modify the rigour of the law of Karman. Devotion to Adi Purusha, according to Patanjali whose system is significantly named Seswera-Sankhya (i. e., Samkhya with God) is only one of the modes of attaining Samadhi among other Upayas mentioned in the Sadhana Pada.

The religious application of causality, Karman, is also the central feature of the Nyaya and Vaisesika schools. In these Sutras Isvera is not clearly postulated either as the author or as controller of the small Anus (atoms?) of which the world is supposed to consist. Only in one place, Gotama adverts to divine agency (Sutras Book IV, 19-21, See, M. M. Six Sys. pp. 332 & 424. Both the schools adopt Arambhavada, or the theory of atomic agglomeration, differing from evolution (Parinama) and far removed from Vivarta (illusion). "If wholes are constantly divided and subdivided, we should in the end be landed in nihilism, but this is not to be. There cannot be annihilation because the Anus or the

smallest parts are realities (Gotama IV, 8, 82) and according to their very nature cannot be further reduced or compressed out of being" (M. M. Six Systems, 426). This strengthens the theists who argue that atoms, unchangeable and indestructible are "manufactured articles bearing the trademark of divine factory. Balfour Stuart and other physicists were until recently holding this view. (McCabe "Existence of God" pp. 72, 73). But the atom today is the product of evolution (Parinama) and no longer the primary that it was supposed to be. The objection to atomism that Akasa (space) is everywhere, and therefore in the atom also, and if the atom has figure or a without and within, it is of necessity divisible, anticipated the breaking of the atom into electrons circling round protons like minute solar systems. The atom itself is mostly empty space, Akasa, at relatively large distances, tiny electrons fly about like bees 'in the Victoria Station.' Modern science defied emphatically the maxim *Regressio in infinitum* in regard to the division of the atom, which now is a cluster of feeble electric charges. We trace in Kanada the seed of the notion of material atoms made up of energy. The Vaiseshikas believe that 'the impulse given to atoms comes from God.' (M. M. Six Sys. p. 44¹). Kanada's Anus are equatable to electrons, as the atom in the western science no longer excludes further analysis. These invisible particles are held by Kanada to be eternal in themselves, but non-eternal as aggregates" (Six Systems p. 446). The nearest approach to Exner's theory of statistical determination is disclosed in the Vaiseshika thought. The Anus (electrons?) are unconditioned and indeterminate individually, they receive their impulse from God, but as aggregates

they are non-eternal, i. e., conditioned and determined. We feel the atmosphere of modern Heisenberg, Exner, and Eddington. The Anus do not assume perceptibility till they combine in three doubles (Trianuka). The idea of a double-atom suggests the proton-electron combination. While the concepts of time and space according to Kanada bring to mind Einstein's relativity, his Anu approaches the indeterminacy of modern physics.

Karman as the religious application of the law of causality is accepted throughout the Indian Systems. Even the law of Entropy has its counterpart in the idea that creation resulted from the upsetting of the equipoise of the Gunas of Prakriti, and when their equipoise is restored, Pralaya occurs. (Samkhya Sutras, VI, 42, M. M. Six Syst. p. 110). Kanada expressly says that dissolution (pralaya) ensues when atoms are separated, while creation begins when motion springs up in them, and they are united. India believed in cyclic universes, just as it believed in the immortality of the soul. Sir James Jeans would deny both. The universe, will end, it had a beginning, there was a "creation" (The Mysterious Universe, Sir James H. Jeans, pp. 132, 133). And who is the creator? "We are beginning to suspect that mind is the creator, and governor, of the realm of matter, the mind in which the atoms out of which our individual minds have grown exist as thoughts." "The old dualism of mind and matter seems likely to disappear...through *substantial matter resolving itself into a creation and manifestation of mind.*" (ibid, p. 137). While he thus appears to endow reality to matter in contrast with Samkara's Maya and accepts evolution with Ramanuja,

his creative Mind has nothing in common with man's emotion, morality, or aesthetic appreciation, but merely in the tendency to think mathematically. So long as human qualities are not there we may not much care whether Jeans' Mind is God or his brother in deeper colour. In his "New Background of Science" however, the triple fundamentals of his Mysterious Universe (electron,

protons, & photone) vanish as sheer illusion. This is the rebirth of Samkara clinging to a "mind reigning supreme and alone" But the question remains who created the late Mathematician that faded in the New Background, if not the electrons in Jeans' material brain, the reality on which his illusion works.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

DOES ENGLAND LEAD IN RATIONALISM ?

Indian friends know, of course, that Charles Bradlaugh, the strenuous Republican, Atheist, Birth-control advocate and anti-Imperialist (died 1891) is being remembered by many people in Britain in September, 1933 ; for 26th September is the centenary of his birth in a very humble little corner of London. I once spoke from the same platform with Bradlaugh in London (1885), and class the incident as a fine memory.

Bradlaugh came into such heated conflict with English theological prejudices and with the Christian bigots who tried to bar him out of the House of Commons that a superficial reader of his biography might suppose he would feel a strong animus against his native land. That was not at all the case. A friend who knew him very well said;—

"He would often voice his love of
"England, his admiration of her
"Parliament, his pride in her history.
"Keenly alive to the blots upon it in
"her sinful wars of conquest, and
"cruel wrongs inflicted upon subject
"peoples, he was yet an Englishman
"to the heart's core.

He knew how to harmonize this love of England with support of Irish Home Rule, of the fight against English

Imperialists, and of the claims of India to political development. A voyage to Bombay in December, 1889, took him to the Indian National Congress. Sir William Wedderburn, president of the Congress, cordially welcomed him, and, in the presence of 2000 to 3000 delegates read an address of appreciation. Messages and gifts had flowed in from near and far. Bradlaugh spoke to the great assembly in words of dignified counsel, and profoundest hope for India's future.

If this Rover of India and England had been asked whether he regarded his native country as relatively backward in the promotion of Free Thought, I think he would have answered No. His own career was essentially a success. Upon the public mind in England he left enduring marks of the process of liberation. England is very much nearer to the triumph of Humanism and Humanity's self-rule through Charles Bradlaugh's courage and persistence in face of enormous difficulties. This fact is, in reality, a proof of the capacity of England to release its life and thought from the chains of the old theological creeds.

As I survey the globe of 1933 I do not see any country that goes at a quicker pace in a Rationalism which is

combined with popular education and political advance. Having visited the United States twice, I do not incline to put U. S. A. in the front Rationalist rank, though I am very happily mindful of the great Humanists (Jefferson, Franklin, Whitman, Emerson, Mark Twain, Robert G. Ingersoll) that it has contributed as noble members to the Army of Reason. In some respects, France has stepped more vigorously than any other community. It has given us great pioneers in Voltaire, Hugo, Auguste Comte, Renan, Anatole France, the late Ferdinand Buisson (educationist); but its villages and little towns in the far-spread agricultural regions are hampered by attachment to Roman Catholicism. In scholarship and Biblical criticism, Germany has greatly shone, but the German slowness in political evolution delays that sort of freedom which is witnessed in the record of England, and embodied in such figures as Paine, Holyoake, Foote, and Bradlaugh. Italy has had illustrious Rationalist sons, and, I believe, nurses even now a genuine Humanist feeling behind the Fascist walls, but its

people are still, in the mass, too closely associated with the Papal system. Republican Spain needs the aid of a much more extensive popular school-system. Russia is nominally Rationalist in its leading cities; but, here again, it must be said that no Freethought can be truly healthy and secure unless backed by the efficient education of all the nation's children. We may be sure, indeed, that all the nationalities I have named are gradually moving to a Godless and creedless civilization. But, looking at countries comparatively, I see England as the chief pioneer, in spite of the heavy weight of the English churches, chapels, missionary Societies, and Bible-shops. Whatever form the political life of India may take in future years, it is certain that Indian connexion with English thought, literature and civic methods and progress will greatly assist the emancipation of India from its many theologies and its age-long subservience to priestly authority.

FREDERICK J. GOULD.

London. 22 August, 1933.

A CHALLENGE TO MAHATMA GANDHI.*

This book is written in the form of "An Expostulatory Letter to the Greatest Hindu of the Age from a Critical Co-religionist". The immediate provocation for this letter was a remark made by Sri Santoji Maharaj at a Conference of the All-India Varnasrama Dharma Swaraj Sangh: "We want Swaraj as we had it in the days of Ramachandra..." These people's idea of Rama-Rajya may be inferred from the fact that "Sudras and Untouchables, as

well as women of all castes, were excluded from near the scene while a 'Vishnu-Yaga' ceremony was being performed. The Untouchables were prevented from attending any of the Conference proceedings. But Mahomedan policemen were among those who were there to keep order." Resolutions were passed condemning the Sarda Act and the Widow-marriage Act and declaring that Untouchables were Hindus, but did not form part of the four-caste system. One

* **On RamaRajya**, by S. D. Nadkarni, published by Samaj Samata Sangh, Dadar, Bombay, 1932. Pp. 75, as. 12.

might think that the Mahatma would hardly agree with these fanatics. Why then this letter to him? The explanation is that the Mahatma has been occasionally asking people to make Rama-Rajya their ideal, and approving in particular Rama's abandonment of his wife in deference to popular censure even when he was certain of her 'purity'. Mr. Nadkarni examines this and other episodes in Rama's life which hardly do credit to the popular hero who is considered to be an incarnation of God. He also considers some other episodes in the Ramayana and Mahabharata, which are almost religious books for Hindus.

Rama's wife had been abducted by Ravana, the ten-headed king of Lanka (Ceylon) and she had to stay there for nearly an year before Rama was able to rescue her. When he had killed Ravana and got her back, he told her that he had taken all this trouble to vindicate his honour, but as she had been defiled by her stay there, he could not take her back and she could go where she liked. To prove her purity, she asked a fire to be prepared and jumped into it, but the god of Fire himself gave her back to Rama, saying that she was undefiled. After this Rama went back with her to his kingdom, but after a time he heard that his subjects blamed him for taking her back after her stay with Ravana. To please his subjects, he orders his brother to take her to the forest and leave her there. Mr. Nadkarni rightly thinks that there can be no excuse for this inhuman treatment and however great a warrior he may have been, he certainly showed weakness of mind in yielding to the silly prejudices of his people. A king who is worth the name has to be the leader of his people, not a

follower. Even if he could not persuade them, the right thing for him to do was to offer to abdicate and go to the forest with his wife and to send her there alone and continue to enjoy royal privileges himself. This is a dark spot in his life which no apologetics can wash out.

Another episode unworthy of a warrior was the Vali incident. Rama, when in search of his wife, made a pact with Vali's brother, by which he agreed to kill Vali and give the kingdom to his brother, in return for help to find his wife. Rama asked the brother Sugriva to invite Vali to single combat and while they were so engaged, Rama stood at a distance and shot an arrow at the unsuspecting Vali and killed him. With his dying breath, Vali asked an explanation of this cowardly deed, when Rama replied that as all the earth belonged to Rama's family and as Vali had done wrong in appropriating Sugriva's wife, he had only punished him as was his right. Another explanation is based on the fact that Vali and Sugriva are called 'vanaras', meaning 'monkeys'. The whole story becomes nonsense if they were really monkeys, as Rama could hardly have made a pact with a monkey. It is explained by saying that 'vanaras' were a tribe of non-Aryans. But the defence given is that as Vali was monkey, Rama had obviously the human right to hunt and kill such animals. This becomes much more absurd if we consider that in that case Rama charged a monkey with sexual immorality!

The third blot on Rama's character is his murder of Sambuka who was practising penance. The story is that there being no premature deaths in Rama-Rajya, a Brahman was surprised to see his young son die suddenly and complained

to Rama about it. Rama was told by Narada that the reason was that a Sudra named Sambuka was practising penance in his Kingdom, and as he had no right to do this, the Brahman's son died. Rama therefore went in his aerial car and cut off his head without notice. Rama himself was not at all sure that this measure would be effective, since he requested the gods to revive the Brahman boy when they congratulated him on his deed. Mr. Nadkarni brings out the fact that even if we disregard the utter immorality of the story, it has an intimate bearing on our present-day life and is directly opposed to the current propaganda in favour of Untouchables. He says: "I am aware that your position on this question is that the Rama of your faith and devotion—the perfect avatar of God was incapable of killing Sambuka, or, for that matter, even Ravana, because it would be *himsa* to kill even a real evil-doer like him; and that indeed the villain of the epic is not what he is generally believed to be, viz. an actual being of flesh and blood,.....but that he is to be taken only as a personification of moral evil." This is a very convenient way of wriggling out of inconvenient situation, but Mr. Nadkarni rightly observes: "But after all, what matters is not what you make of these characters, but what the generality of our people think, and their religious mentors teach, about them; and it is with respect to *their* belief and teaching that I expect you to give them a piece of your mind, and impress on them with all the force of moral authority that you (and only you) can command, (1) that *if a real person named Rama killed a real person named Sambuka in the circumstances narrated in the Ramayana, then the act was wrong and inde-*

fensible, and (2) that Sambuka's memory should be honoured as that of a martyr for religious liberty, just as we honour Rama's for his filial piety, valour and resource."

Another method of denying this dishonourable episode is an attempt to prove that it is an interpolation in the Ramayana. But the point is that "what matters and must be of concern to us is the fact that the vast mass of Hindus does take the story in its plain literal sense and has been doing so for very many centuries, commending Rama and denouncing Sambuka for their parts as portrayed in it.....The moral which the story was originally meant to convey is plain as plain can be, and what is more—almost all who are traditionally learned among Hindus are satisfied with that moral: viz. that Hindus who are of Sudra birth commit a mortal sin in performing certain religious acts equally with other Hindus, and that the King or the State is bound to punish the former to preserve inviolate the monopoly of the latter."

Mr. Nadkarni then considers other similar stories not connected with Rama, in particular the Ekalavya episode from the Mahabharata. Drona, the military instructor of the Kaurava and Pandava princes, was himself a Brahmana and refused to give lessons to the non-Aryan prince Ekalavya, who, however, made an image of his Guru and by assiduous study became more proficient than Drona's Aryan pupils. When Drona found this, he claimed his fee and when, Ekalavya offered to give anything he asked, Drona asked him to cut off his right thumb and present it to him as his Dakshina. The pupil obediently did as he was told and naturally lost much of his skill in archery. By this villanous trick, Drona ensured the superiority of his favourite pupil

Arjuna. Mr. Nadkarni points out that when Yudhisthira told a lie on the battle field at the instigation of Krishna (also an avatar of God and the supposed author of the Bhagavad-Gita, the Hindu Bible) who advised him to care more for victory than for virtue, he was punished for this lapse by the loss of his toe when entering heaven bodily, while there is no mention of any retribution for Drona's trick, showing plainly that the action was approved.

Mr. Nadkarni then describes how the Brahmans became powerful and laid down religious rules in minute detail, e.g. "After washing the feet and hands, one should carefully examine the water and drink it three times; then he should wipe his mouth twice with the root of the thumb, somewhat bent." Brahmans insisted of being exempted from laws governing ordinary mortals and became unbearably insolent. Mr. Nadkarni points out, however, that non-Brahmans were as much to blame for allowing themselves to be trodden on as Brahmans for taking advantage of circumstances to aggrandize themselves. In spite of so-called civilization, there is always a fight for power in

the political, social and religious fields. European nations have profited at the expense of coloured races, men at the expense of women, Brahmans at the expense of other castes, and even these have helped to torture the so-called untouchables. All this is accepted as sound tradition and any attempt to upset it meet with violent opposition. All this is but to be expected, but people like the Mahatma should realize that the popular idea of Rama-Rajya includes all kinds of undesirable traditions and not preach to them about the blessing of Rama-Rajya. Mr. Nadkarni appeals to him as the only person who can influence the people to a certain extent, not to encourage the demoniac activities of bodies like the Varnashrama Sangha and the Bharata Dharma Mahamandal, who are trying their best to perpetuate slave-mentality among the Hindu masses.

I am very much afraid that the Mahatma is not likely to be persuaded, but Mr. Nadkarni has done well to voice the appeal.

R. D. KARVE.

THE GOD-FORMULA.

(A Doggerel)

One is the father, another mother,
Between them they reckon two,
When they in ultimate result
Unite, are they one or two?

Mother and child ar'nt they two?
But mother, less child, is mother none,
So too the child, the mother apart,
Maternity, is it one or two?

The male and mate, the spouse are two
The one without the other
Were quantity unknown,
In union are they one or two?

So is a brother and his sister,
One by each self both count two,
But when they stand together,
If fraternity one or two?

Every one and the other,
Thus bundled up together,
In harmony and in love,
Is it one or two?

Man is one and woman two,
Their ways divide in twain,
But man and woman in their embrace
Is it one or two for the race?

So, every one and the other,
Qua the relation of that other
Though one entire in its tether,
Counts two when put asunder
And one, to ignore the rest.
Each with the other
And none without the second,
Is an entity entire.

Thus with God and the world
That human souls comprise,
If God were there without,
And stood unrelated beyond,
That were a predicament
Not for a soul to mind.

If "soul" were the thing in self,
Standing apart from divinity,
Not bent nor owning unity,
That were a state of perfection
Braving further deflection.

But God and the Soul,
They both in terms connote,
An imperfection each in self,
That mutual attraction solely
Repairs the breach duly.

If thus the God, from soul apart,
Is monstrous abstraction,
And me without my God
Is preposterous arrogance

What is the name that seers give
To that which is
The mingling of the two?

Thus doth the Vedantin soar
To reach his sole Infinity,
In distinct fields, dualists explore,
A transcendental divinity.

Truth lurks the Vaishnava swears :
"Not one, nor distinct two, one hears—
The mysterious One the other bears."

Proud India's soul, the worlds amaze,
One, two, perchance the third ablaze,
Neither being a quantity,
Whole and independent,
On God the universe hangs,
Him the universe bends.

How then is the one devoid,
And the other of Primal Strength,
That needs the former for the stage?
Or is it a mysterious relation,
Where stage or actor, one or both,
Neither Is nor Isn't?

Cocanada,
14-8-1933.

M. V. V. K. Rangachari,

(with apologies to the poet, the
three orthodoxies, and freethought.)

THEOLOGICAL ANTAGONISM TO HYGIENE.

From prehistoric times contagious and infective diseases have been attributed to supernatural causes. Even in cultured communities, such as those of classic Greece and Rome, this misconception prevailed with the common population. Among the Israelites the belief was universal, as their Scriptures clearly demonstrate. The plague which desolated Israel in the days of Aaron was stayed only when the high priest had placated

Jahveh with prayer and sacrifice. Similarly, when David numbered the people, and the incensed divinity sent a pestilence which destroyed 70,000 of his chosen children, burnt offerings were essential to turn Jahveh's indignation aside. The divine origin of disease in all its many forms thus became a settled doctrine throughout Christendom, and all sanitary safeguards were treated as mischievous and misleading, right down to modern generations.

As the celebrated physician, Sir W. Osler, remarks in his *Evolution of Modern Medicine*: "The attitude of the early Fathers towards the body is well expressed by Jerome" "Does your skin roughen without baths? Who is washed in the blood of Christ needs not wash again!" Or, as Tertullian asserted, "Investigation since the Gospel is no longer necessary."

During the unchallenged supremacy of the Church, earthquakes, eclipses, epidemics and other intermittent phenomena were always ascribed either to God, or his adversary Satan, and the alarm arising from this morbid belief greatly aggravated the evils of plague and famine when these appeared.

The state of filth in which Christendom wallowed for more than a thousand years seems almost incredible. The refreshing bath so highly appreciated by the Pagan Romans completely disappeared from Western Christendom. Outside Moslem Spain, sanitation was unknown. The modern proverb that "cleanliness is next to godliness" would have been scouted as a pestilent heresy.

Doubtless the Oriental teaching that the humiliation of man's bodily framework adds to God's glory, served to strengthen antagonism towards hygiene. For Eastern asceticism had been embraced by the Church. The great sanctity of many saints is closely associated with their inordinate craving for filth. The Breviary of the Western Church stresses the holiness of St. Hilarion, who never washed himself in his life. St. Anthony is exalted because his feet were never clean. And so on through a lengthy list of shining, if unwashed, saints, until we reach St. Simeon Stylites, whose person and surroundings were so unspeakably loathsome

as to occasion wonder, astonishment and nausea, even in the malodorous age he adorned with his piety. Indeed, so firmly linked were faith and filth that the compilers of the *Lives of the Saints* note with satisfaction that at a time when certain monks desired to cleanse their skins "the Almighty manifested his displeasure by drying up a neighbouring stream until the bath which it had supplied was destroyed."

No marvel then, that when in the fourteenth century, the Black Death desolated the earth from far Eastern Asia to North-Western Europe, mortality and religious mania were so dreadful. *Merry England*, as some profess to regard this peerless period, was devastated by this dire visitation in 1348-49. This Plague returned in 1361 and in 1369. The Black Death was so named from the dark spots and tumours which appeared on its victims' bodies, and assured their speedy death. All appeal to relics, all prayers and processions proved abortive, and perhaps a third of Europe's population perished in utter misery.

The terrible death roll of this far-flung epidemic was one only of its consequences. Religious excitement developed into unbridled sensuality and other forms of perversion which defy description. The flagellant mania of the period, in Germany and elsewhere, constitutes one of the most remarkable perversions of mankind. A positive orgy of lasciviousness prevailed, and a dancing epidemic ran riot in Central Europe in which insensate leaping, reeling, and uncontrollable raving were conspicuous characteristics. In fact, insanity everywhere reigned. Amidst this wave of theomania—to borrow a term from Maudsley—the customary bonds of social life were broken. As one writer

tells us, "friend deserted friend, and mothers fled from their stricken children, and the demoralization showed itself in many cases in reckless debauchery. Elsewhere perverted Christian zeal led to frightful persecution of the Jews, as at Mayence, where 12,000 Hebrews were believed to have been massacred."

Contemporary English scribes, including Langford and Chaucer, chronicled the terrors of the time, while Boccaccio penned a vivid picture of the ravages of the pestilence in Florence.

One may imagine the frantic appeals to heaven in an age so benighted. Nor was the financial factor neglected, for the opulent poured their treasures into the coffers of the Church. Land and money passed extensively into clerical possession, and churches, abbeys, shrines were enriched on an enormous scale. White declares that: "The whole evolution of modern history, not only ecclesiastical but civil has been largely affected by the wealth transferred to the clergy at such periods. It was noted that in the fourteenth century after the plague, the Black Death had passed, an immensely increased proportion of the landed and personal property of every European country was in the hands of the Church. Well did a great ecclesiastic remark that, 'pestilences are the harvests of the minister of God.'"

With cesspools and midden heaps infecting the streets of the leading European cities, the universality of soil closets, and the general absence of decently clean water added to the insanitary habits of the community, there need be little wonder that the death-rate was so appalling. For, we must remember that every rank in society from Popes and Princes to peasants, seldom or never washed.

So late as the seventeenth century, the pestilence constantly reappeared in London, but with the dawn of the eighteenth its ravages became less. Doubtless the fierce conflagration of 1666, which succeeded the terrible epidemic so graphically described by Defoe, destroyed many sources of infection. When London was rebuilt, wider, better drained, and ventilated thoroughfares replaced the stinking courts and alleys of the earlier Metropolis. The water supply became purer and more plentiful, and several maladies long prevalent, such as dysentery, began to wane. Meanwhile the clergy were offering special prayers to mitigate the evils of uncleanness. Some ascribed the epidemic to Sabbath-breaking, profanity, and similar sins. On the European mainland and in the New World the story is the same. A disease which swept away large numbers of the American Indians was actually welcomed in pious circles as the Almighty's method of preparation for the settlement of true Christians in the country.

In France, the Plague was exorcised by means of fetishes, so recently as the eighteenth century, while in priest-deluded Austria the scourge was met with prostration before the images of saints or by appeal to monks specially gifted with power to expel the demons causing the disease. For to consult a qualified physician was deemed impious in districts where cowed charlatans abounded. The mortality was consequently enormous but it soon declined with the progress of sanitary science.

In days when the plague was stayed in Catholic lands by witch-burning, exorcism, religious processions, prayers, and presents to the clergy; in Calvinistic Caledonia, periods of penance were appointed, and wizards were put to

death. Despite the healthy climate of Scotland, the dreadful dirtiness both of dwellings and people proved greatly conducive to the spread of disease. In those dark times, the ordure or other refuse which is now carried away in sewers or incinerated, accumulated and festered outside the houses or was cast into the courts and wynds. Although thirty serious epidemics depopulated Scotland in the course of four centuries, a naturally highly intellectual people were so bemused with superstition that no rational remedy was utilized. The ministers declared, and their flocks believed, that these direful visitations resulted from sin, and the death penalty in its most agonizing forms was inflicted on those whose

alleged shortcomings had brought God's vengeance on the land.

Pioneers strove to enlighten the people, and an attempt was made to cleanse the Edinburgh streets in 1585, but neither the secular nor spiritual authorities lent any support. In 1700, fire, the ruthless purifier, burnt down much of Edinburgh, and the Town Council of the Capital City interpreted this conflagration as 'a fearful rebuke of God.' Yet, with the destruction of the ancient pest-houses and other nurseries of disease, it was remarked that the maladies and mortality of the modern Athens had markedly diminished.

T. F. PALMER.
in *The Freethinker*.

BIRTH CONTROL IN INDIA

AND

THE LEGISLATION NECESSARY TO PROTECT MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS AND MUNICIPAL HEALTH OFFICERS AGAINST THE IMPOSITION OF PENALTIES BY LOCAL BODIES OR MEDICAL COUNCILS

The Rationalist Association, Bombay, organised a public meeting which was addressed by three leading Medical Practitioners with British qualifications, one Professor of Biology from a Government College and two prominent workers in the public life of Bombay. All these speakers were distinguished Indian Graduates of the Bombay University and the Hall was filled with educated men and women, young as well as old. The subject was discussed by every speaker in a scientific manner from various standpoints and there was a desire expressed at the end by several friends from the audience that a series of lectures should be organised for public benefit by the Bombay Medical Union as well as the

Rationalist Association. For the first time in the history of this city three eminent medical men, Dr. Deshmukh, M. D., F. R. C. S., the Ex-Mayor of Bombay, Dr. Khanolkar, the Dean of the Municipal College and Hospital, and Dr. Erulkar, spoke from a public platform on this so-called delicate, but most important subject, to the future of the human race. Things are moving fast in Western countries and it is a happy omen that the Indian Medical Profession is not lagging behind in this sacred mission of serving humanity. Alleviation of human suffering has been the main source of the income of individual practitioners but preventive medicine is now drawing the attention of public medical officers who now openly complain

about the lack of support by funds from Municipal and State finances of the country. Lt. Col. A. J. H. Russell, Officiating Public Health Commissioner with the Government of India, in his Annual Report for 1930, dated September 1932, writes that "the health of the people is theoretically acknowledged by politicians, by financiers and by leaders of the Commercial World to be of first importance but when these leaders of the nation come to deal with the actual facts of a everyday world and especially with Budgets which fail to balance, public health is quietly but firmly forced to one side with a vague expression of hope that in the future something more may be possible.

.....
If indeed we were to spend a hundred times as much as we now do upon the pursuit of nature's secrets and upon the practical application of the knowledge already gained by that pursuit in the field of hygiene, it would not be extravagant. The greater danger at present is that Government will apply pruning shears so ruthlessly that progress in the development of public health will be brought to a halt and that the gains already made in the control or elimination of diseases will be lost through a policy of false economy."

Propaganda for public health and eugenic breeding suffers from the handicap of mass illiteracy in this country in addition to ignorant and prudish notions of Municipal Councillors and Medical men with wornout ideas of moral considerations as they understand them to be. Unfortunately even the semi-educated men fail to realise that a correct knowledge will prevent a good deal of the present secret immorality and will raise the public morals to a higher level. The Municipal Corporation of Bombay as well

as the Municipal Council of another large City, namely Ahmedabad, in this Presidency discussed very superficially permissive resolutions for Municipal Health Officers to give contraceptive advice to married women. The Bombay Municipality threw out the resolution by a small majority while the Ahmedabad resolution had to be withdrawn by the Mover as it had no chance at all of being passed by that body.

In the Annual Report on the Moral and Material Progress of India the Publicity Officer of the Government of India who wrote the Volume on "India in 1930-31" writes that "it appears to be the general opinion of Indian economists who discuss the population problem of this country that the only practical method of limiting population is by the introduction of artificial method of Birth Control." (which should more accurately be called "The Scientific Methods of Control against undesired conception".)

"In India as elsewhere there has indeed recently been a marked increase in the demand among certain classes for scientific knowledge on the subject and the movement appears to be less hampered by misplaced prudery than in some countries which claim to be more civilised. Not only is artificial control advocated by a large number of medical writers, but India can now boast of a neo-Malthusian League with two Maharajahs, three High Court Judges and four or five men very prominent in public life as its sponsors. But such interest as is displayed in these matters is inevitably confined almost entirely to the educated classes and the practical effects on a population of 353 millions of whatever artificial restrictions is actually practiced must be almost nil. At any rate there seems to be a good deal to be said in favour of

arranging that in Maternity Clinics and during the course of "Baby Weeks," instructions in Birth Control should be provided".

In England there is no law, as also in India, against the Propaganda of Birth Control or against the general dissemination of information on the methods of preventing conception so long as there is no obscenity in the presentation of the information but there was a ban against public and Municipal Health Officers giving contraceptive advice and the Medical Profession had to respond to the prevalent prudery against open contraceptive advice even in private practice. In India, the legal position is very much the same except that there is no ban on the part of the Executive Health Ministers disallowing contraceptive advice to married women if a local body may choose to permit it. The Indian Medical Profession follows the British professional convention as well as the popular prudery in this country. The Ministers of Health in England at one time thought that as the Health Centres were supported by public funds derived in part from the taxation of individuals with a conscientious objection to Birth control, the ban had to be maintained. It was only a Labour Minister who set aside this objection recently and with it the ban also, and now the Municipal and local bodies are free to permit their Health Officers to give contraceptive advice. Mysore and Travancore Governments have permitted and established Contraceptive Clinics at certain public hospitals. Even to-day in India, unfortunately, there is a section of the Medical Profession who favour the control of conception on medical grounds but not on economic grounds. Considerations of public health and the health of individuals depend upon the economic

circumstances and really speaking there is hardly anything in this prejudice against economic grounds to warrant the control of conception. There is no religious conscientious objection in India as in the case of the Roman Catholics of Europe. But the masses are both illiterate and ignorant and therefore breed dysgenically. Books both in English and in the Vernaculars are freely sold for the benefit of literate persons and even so there is a lot of mischief done to the mind and body of an individual for want of expert guidance or complete scientific information being available in a book written from the medical as well as sociological standpoints. Under these circumstances progress would be very slow if things are allowed to take their own course under the local influence of semi-educated Municipal and Local Councillors. What is therefore necessary is more definite permissive legislation making all medical and public health officers free from the fear of any penalties which may be inflicted by any Statutory Medical Council under its Bye-Laws or any Municipal or Local Body under its disciplinary control of its Public Health Servants. This would only be a first step which will have later on to be followed by further legislation making it obligatory on all Municipal and Local Bodies to provide for contraceptive advice through their Health Officers and public health Propaganda.

In Soviet Russia both public health Propaganda and scientific control of conception are being carried on a scale unknown in any other country in the world. The population is increasing in spite of contraceptive advice because of better health conditions and improved economic life. But the people there are on the upward grade of

improving their future race. Better and healthier life is made possible there than under Czarist Russia because of better education and no unemployment under organised economic planned production for the use of the nation at large.

Maurice Hindus, an American Journalist, in describing his experience during the summer of 1929 while collective farming was being pushed through in Soviet Russia (published in book form under the title "Red Bread", published by Jonathan Cape, Ltd., in 1931) has the following remarks on the stage of contraceptive propaganda attained in Russia in 1929:—

"The KOLHOZ (Collective Farming) further promises to reduce appreciably Russia's birth rate. Because of the fall in the death rate from 30.5 per thousand in the pre-war days to 17.4. per thousand in the three years between 1926 and 1929, the population in Russia has been increasing more rapidly than in all of non-Russia Europe. In 1930 Russia boasted 20 million more people on the territories, she is now occupying, than in 1913. Were this increase to continue unchecked, the Russian Revolutionaries, in spite of the Marxian doctrine which presupposes a sufficiency of material goods for uncontrolled growth in population, might eventually find themselves face to face with a serious problem.

"Fortunately for them the KOLHOZ promises to solve it automatically. Let it be remembered that for the peasant, as for all primitive people, large families are a form of insurance against the mis-haps of life, especially of old age. On the KOLHOZ the need for such insurance disappears. The aged and the disabled live at the expense of the community. Thus one of the primary motives for large

families ceases to exist. Meanwhile the women are gaining in sophistication. They have more leisure and greater opportunities for recreation and diversion. They enjoy the gatherings and the variety of entertainments which the KOLHOZ fosters. They begin to crave greater freedom, and no longer want to bear as many children as in the old days. The spread of Birth-control offers the means of satisfying their wishes. The Medical Commissions which are making the rounds of collective farms usually hold sessions with the women on Birth control. Of course there is still an acute shortage of physicians and trained nurses, and so the number of these commissions is small. In time, however, as fresh crops of graduates from Medical Schools swell the ranks of physicians more and more such commissions will be sent out to the land."

On the other hand the Census Commissioner, Dr. H. J. H. Hutton, whose final report on the 1931 Census of India has been just out this month (September 1933) reveals important facts and has interesting observations to make. The actual increase during the ten years ending March 1931 is a little under 84 millions, that is, about 10.6 percent, while the total population of England is only 39 millions and about just the same figure is the total population of France and Italy. He remarks that this increase is from most points of view a cause for alarm rather than for satisfaction and suggests that if the luxury of Baby weeks is to be permitted in future, they should at least be accompanied by instruction in Birth Control. On the other hand the percentage of literacy taken all over India has risen only from 7 to 8 per cent during these ten years. It is hardly necessary to add, as a final conclusion, from above comparisons, that State action outlined above

coupled with a rapid spread of literacy on a countrywide scale at the entire cost of the Central Government is the only remedy to increase the standard of living accompanied by intensive agriculture on co-operative machinery farming under State assistance and guidance so as to engender a correctly responsible sense of

Eugenic Breeding through scientific understanding.

The increase in population would not under such conditions be any matter of alarm or any menace to the progress of human culture as Dr. Hutton apprehends.

MANIKLAL H. VAKIL.

BIRTH CONTROL ASSOCIATION.

To

The Editor, The Reason,

Sir.

Dr. Hutton's statement comes none too soon because if we are to do anything to save the appalling death rate of India's women and children or to ameliorate their misery, the need for such an Association is glaringly evident.

It is evident also that superstition, religion, and the good old mother-in-law will hamper the work of such an Association more than is humanely possible to endure, but that should not deter the workers.

The usual cry of "Religion in Danger" or a direct accusation that the organizers of such an Association are out to seduce other peoples' wives and daughters will generously be hurled at the workers. That is nothing new and the workers of both sexes should be prepared for this and more!

What passes my comprehension is that though it is the woman who suffers, yet very few women appear to care to come forward and ameliorate their own fate. That may be due to the millions of years of hammering that woman is a chattel; but the spread of education and the breaking down of

hoary and senseless customs should see changes very soon.

Whatever the world may say against Russia, none can deny that the status of Woman has been raised to the level of Man with positive advantage to her character and outlook on life. Of course, those Old Timers who want a door mat type of woman have their bowdy howl, but they being chiefly old people are fortunately dying out by themselves, though too slowly, in the interest of Progress!

Any discussion or instruction on sex matters is ipso facto "immoral" or "sinful" to those very "pure" people, (but check up their private lives first!). Besides, you will mostly find people whose sex life is over making the most noise against any progress or enlightenment for the woman in that sphere.

The past generation has seen too much behind-door methods on sex matters which have shown no good results. It is time that sex education should be treated as any other normal subject and all hocuspocus discarded!

In Russia, I believe the question of Birth Control grew out of the campaign against abortion. Their primary object is to raise the social status of the working class, for social necessity, especially

the lack of housing, which is still the main cause of abortion. They could not shut their eye to the fact that the artificial interruption of pregnancy, particularly when repeated, is injurious to the women.

The beneficial influence which the teaching of Birth Control following an abortion has had on the reduction of the number of abortions can be seen from the following figures :—

(from statements made by Dr. Martha Ruben Wolf at the Seventh International Birth Control Conference at Zurich, Sept: 1930.)

	1st abortion.	2nd abortion.	3rd abortion.
Capital			
Cities.	61.7 %	23.3 %	8 %
Provincial			
Towns.	65.5 %	22.7 %	7.1 %
Country			
Districts.	72.6 %	17.9 %	5.7 %

Further, the time-honoured, though a particularly sad form of Birth Control, namely, the abandonment of children, is bound to decrease when correct information and help is given on Birth Control. In Soviet Russia alone (R.S.F.S.R.) from 70,000 abandonments it fell to 6,000 in 1927 and all such abandoned children are now housed in homes.

In Russia, "the request for contraception must be made by the woman herself, the physician will not persuade her to use them except in cases essential on medical grounds". Those wiseacres who are so loud in their denunciation of Birth Control, either do not know or refuse to accept that Soviet Russia is the only country which has almost the same birth rate as before the War.

All other European countries show unheard of decreases, in Germany, from 800,000 in 1913 to 340,000 in 1929, in England, from 25,000 to 110,000 in the last three years (i.e. 1928 to 1931), while Soviet Russia shows a yearly increase of $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions, or, as is calculated, an increase of 17.5 millions in 5 years or a population of 200 millions in 1940. This is a country of free legalized abortions and intensive birth control propaganda.

Where Soviet Russia can look after the increase by increased total production, for India it does not appear to be possible yet. In fact, if the birth rate goes on as it now does, in ten years the food supply will run short, so it is authoritatively stated.

Some doctors may be against Birth Control as doing more harm to the woman than good, but before we examine their statements we must see whether they are financially interested in births!

The world's doctors who have spent their lives on research and actual practice thereof, without any hesitation declare the approved methods of contraception as harmless to the majority of women. Like in everything else, there is a good and a bad method in this also.

To talk about self-control may suit men and women over 50, but it is as stupid a suggestion as it is futile. Sexual intercourse is as natural a function as anything else which is human, and as such is to be faced boldly rather than surrounded by taboos or manifold hypocrisies. There is nothing immoral, abnormal, or sinful for healthy men, and women to have sex experiences, and for those who, for various reasons cannot marry and for those who have

married and cannot afford to have children, contraception is the only remedy. To let sex experience be the sole prerogative of the married is a definitely selfish and inhuman view to take of an absolutely natural human desire. The argument that this brings Man down to the level of beasts is the product of a crabbed mentality. Controlling the natural desires of Man irrespective of it being harmful, or not to him, is not the sole salvation for that majestic being Mr. Man.

Another great argument of the half-wits is that to make Birth Control common would lead to "temptation" and then there would be no "retribution." If we carried this superb piece of "reasoning" to its logical end, for the sake of "retribution", doctors should not cure syphilitics and others.

Isn't it much better if any such temptation does exist and there is the likelihood of "falls," that by spreading

Birth Control knowledge the harm that such falls "may do, is entirely removed? Even granting that the spread of Birth Control knowledge would lead to "sinning," it is a greater sin to bring into this world child after child without an atmosphere of misery, dirt and squalor as an heritage!

Let us hope that the meeting held under the auspices of the Rationalist Association of India due to the efforts of Mr. Kulakari's untiring work and zeal in this cause will prove helpful to those humanitarians who see the want of such an Association, to get together, and form one for the purpose of establishing Health Centres, Clinics, and in 1001 ways helping the mother, bride, widow or unmarried girl who will be responsible for a fitter and better race of Indians.

YOURS ETC.,
D. R. D. WADIA.

Bombay, 25-9-33.

WHEN PHYSICISTS PHILOSOPHIZE

A layman in the sphere of physical science approaches popular expositions of the more startling developments in this field with an uneasy mixture of diffidence and suspicion. That something important has been going on he can hardly doubt—something that may have direct bearing on theories about the world and man in which his religion, ethics and philosophy are profoundly implicated—something that he ought to know about. Confronted with a subject of baffling intricacy his position is that of the humblest learner, and how can he learn without a teacher? Hence the unique authority of those specialists who combine

with first-hand knowledge the ability to impart it to the uninitiated—not that their conclusions are infallible, of course, but that within their proper limits they are far more likely to be right than any objections which untutored common sense could bring against them. Both Sir James Jeans and Sir Arthur Eddington possess this authority in physics and astronomy and it is natural that the modest reader should accept the latest elucidations of their views with a minimum of critical analysis, grateful as always for the imaginative virtuosity of the presentation or the occasional flashes of insight it provides, and prepared to

attribute his own accompanying bewilderment to a lack of that mathematical and experimental technique without which, as we are frequently reminded, no genuine understanding is here possible.

Yet even the modest layman must begin to have his doubts. If at all widely read in these matters he knows by this time that previous philosophizings of Jeans and Eddington have been sharply criticized by Russell, Levy and others and that such outstanding physicists as Planck and Einstein dissent emphatically from their conclusions. But more than this, he can hardly fail to find the theories themselves, in the pictorial form in which they are usually presented, internally discrepant, and the grounds adduced for them indecisive and vague. The conviction grows that a part at least of the resulting confusion reflects a condition in the author's mind as well as in that of the reader and the latter, feeling something to be wrong without being in any position to determine from his own knowledge what it is, feels strongly tempted to forego further investigation until those licensed to preach have achieved some more coherent statement of their own theories. Do these two new contributions to the literature of popularized speculative science actually clarify this subject, or do they merely add new complications to the already unassimilable mass of information in this field? Such clarification, rather than descriptions, however entertaining, of expanding spaces and errant photons, would seem to be what is most to be desired from our scientific expositors.

In the case of Eddington's book the desire is satisfied in considerable measure. It does advance our understanding of what physics is now doing and how it is

doing it. And this result is achieved not by scientific philosophizing in Eddington's usual manner but by brilliant reporting of what is actually going on in science itself—the report of a man who knows what he is talking about and can communicate it with an imaginative sympathy for the limitations of the non-mathematical reader which is really remarkable. If the interested reader permits his well-grounded suspicions of this author's metaphysical excursions to keep him from this fascinating account of the growth and present status of an important physical hypothesis he will miss an intellectual adventure of first rate value.

The distinctive character of the exposition is indicated in the author's contrast between the workshop and the showroom of science. It is to the former that he here invites us, that we may observe the operation of scientific thought in its own province and about its own business. We are shown the way in which a problem arises, the considerations that lead to a questioning of old preconceptions and that suggest new and fruitful hypotheses and, above all, the unique combination of speculative imagination with experimental testing which makes this science the preeminent expression of human reason which in fact it is. Those who care to understand the sort of validity that a scientific theory has *for a scientist*—the way in which he uses it to direct investigation and the readiness with which he adjusts it to new facts as they are discovered—will find here a truer picture of what Meyerson has called the *cheminement* of thought than in more technically logical and epistemological treatises on the subject. It is noteworthy that Eddington, after thus supplying really valuable material for a philosophy of science, should observe in conclusion

"Except for one lapse, I have avoided questions of philosophy" (page 174). In fact, by avoiding the dubious metaphysics of his earlier books he has made accessible and credible what is really of philosophical importance in his subject. Whether the "universe" proves on further investigation to be expanding in accordance with Eddington's formulæ or not, it has at least been made clear why it should now be reasonable to suppose that it does expand and what this hypothesis can contribute to the progress of theoretical physics at precisely this stage of its development.

"The New Background of Science" is a more ambitious survey, both the range of subjects covered and in the nature of its conclusions. It includes general observations on the history and methods of physical science with illustrative quotations, not always very happily chosen from philosophers, and rather extensive expositions of the theories of relativity and quanta in their experimental origins, theoretical vicissitudes and philosophical implications. All this involves much learning, some useful information and an occasional illustrative device which rivals the best in Eddington. But the science presented is mainly of the "showroom" variety; we do not see enough of either the experimental grounds for these theories or their success in dealing with the facts they were devised to organize really to understand their physical meaning and validity. They are thus cut off from the background which makes their importance intelligible. Yet Jeans is much concerned with "backgrounds" and particularly with the background needed for an understanding of recent physics. This background is to be supplied by a "new philosophy" which "the twentieth

century physicist is hammering out for himself" (page 2)—"the philosophy of a scientist, not of a metaphysician" (page vii). It is not a very satisfactory philosophy, hardly more in fact than an incoherent mixture of the metaphysics of objective idealism with the positivistic and psychologically dubious epistemology of subjectism. As a serious contribution to its subject it is about on a level with the science which a metaphysician without special training or competence in physics might "hammer out for himself" if he found that his philosophy appeared to require a revision of current physical theories—the science of a metaphysician, not of a physicist. One wonders what estimate Jeans himself would place on such a theory.

It will not do, however, to dismiss this phase of Jean's work as unfortunate venture into matters with which he is not really prepared to deal. For it is his contention that the old separation between science and philosophy has broken down. The physicist himself, in the pursuit of purely physical knowledge, has come to raise just those questions about the nature and ultimacy of space, time and causality, the relation of mind to its object and the life with which philosophy has always been concerned. And if it is physics that requires a modification of philosophic notions, surely the physicist is called upon to specify these requirements and to determine their implications. It is this phase of his argument which gives to Jean's theory such plausibility as it possesses and there is enough truth in it to repay further investigation.

A specific instance will clarify the issue. Jeans states one important philosophical consequence of recent physics as follows: The physicist "no longer

sees nature as something entirely distinct from himself. Sometimes it is what he himself creates, or selects or abstracts; sometimes it is what he destroys" (page 2). This derives from "the Einstein-Heisenberg policy of concentrating on observables" (page 282) and its outcome "seems to lend a new meaning to the dictum *esse est percipi* of the philosophy of an earlier age" (page 283). A little further inquiry into this portentous announcement is enough to show that Jeans has simply confused two sets of considerations which really have nothing in common. The "observables" to which the "subjectivist" physicist retreats are photons, which have never been directly observed at all, and "instrumental effects", including "light, photographic action, electric currents etc." (page 173). Duhem's classic analysis of the theoretical interpretation presupposed in the laboratory "observation" of an electric current has indicated once for all how remote such experimental findings are from the "sense data" with which Jeans is trying to connect them. The truth is that a physical experiment presupposes a background of realistic common sense and science which it never calls in question at all, and which Jeans himself assumes in making use of the accepted body of physical fact. Thus in spite of his devotion to "observables" he does not hesitate to describe the structure of intergalactic spaces, to announce that matter is made up of protons and electrons or to conclude, on rather scanty evidence, that "somewhere in Heisenberg's equation the innermost nature of atomic structure must lie hidden, if we could but read the riddle right" (page 191). It is possible to reconcile such scientific conclusions with the metaphysics of idealism, as it has

always been, but to suppose that such a metaphysics actually is implied by the current distinction between experimental findings and the more speculative extensions of physical knowledge is sheer confusion. It is no help to philosophic idealism, whose very considerable claims are grounded in quite other types of fact, and it is a real disservice to scientific theory itself, since it leads the reader to expect a type of skepticism about experience wholly alien to scientific methods and results. Instead of discovering a new background for science Jeans has simply seen it out of focus.

If space permitted, analyses of this sort could be multiplied. The evident incongruity of the attempted connection of sub-atomic indeterminacy with human free will is, of course, a case in point. We must be content, however, with a general observation. It has been shown that physical theories have changed, and changed fundamentally. If by "background" we mean the set of concepts which physics at any time takes as basic and in terms of which its results are interpreted, then Jeans is right in saying that a new background has been created by physicists themselves, and that this is a fact of philosophical importance. But this "background" is not itself a philosophy, it is simply theoretical physics, limited in its meaning and application by special and abstract considerations that dictate the choice of a physical theory, and subject to change as new data are forthcoming. As reflecting the state of contemporary science, it provides material with which any serious philosophy must deal. But to deal with it philosophically is not, as here, to generalize its more striking and fashionable tendencies until they become solutions of epistemological and metaphysical problems, sup-

plementing their essential abstractness by juxtaposing with them half-understood systems of philosophy to which they bear a superficial resemblance. It is curious that Jeans, who sees so clearly the mistake of "mechanistic" physicists in using the physical "background" of their time as support for a materialistic philosophy, should not suspect that idealistic physicists, though a few years later in time, may be guilty of a very similar mistake.

An adequate philosophy would proceed more justly, I think, and more slowly. Mindful, first of all, that the most abstract sciences are not our only channels of information as to the nature of reality and that the more speculative developments in physics are far from constituting the whole body even of physical knowledge, the philosopher would naturally see these "revolutionary" developments in a wider perspective than does the specialist who reports them. Though electrons may be as undetermined in their movements as even Jeans hopes they are, the course of nature which

mainly concerns human hopes and prospects remains as obdurately determined as ever. Noticing, moreover, that the quantum theory, for example, has already passed through a number of divergent theoretical interpretations, which Jeans makes doubly difficult by apparently endorsing and abandoning each in turn, the philosopher may even be content to wait for further developments without staking the structure of the universe on the next version that happens to emerge. But finally, realizing that through just this development the physical world does progressively reveal itself, he will accept so much of these theories as seems actually to further investigation as the best information about purely physical facts which is now available. And so far only, I think, can the "background" of physical science, whether new or old, be considered a contribution to philosophy.

ARTHUR E. MURPHY
in "*The New Humanist*"

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

There is no doubt that the question of Birth Control is now attracting wide attention in India. Every thoughtful and intelligent person begins to recognize that some check is necessary to the population of India which is increasing by leaps and bounds. Nature, itself, provided that check in years gone by. Small pox, fevers, cholera, dysen-

tery, famine and wars thinned down the excesss of population and kept the balance. Now, science and peaceful conditions have altered this with the result that the increase of population is looked upon by many as an evil instead of a blessing. The Census Officer, for India, in his interesting report, bluntly tells us that if Birth Control is not adopted in

right earnest there is disaster ahead and there can be no doubt about it. *

* * *

* The great interest that people are taking in this serious question probably explains the large attendance that was present when "Birth Control" was discussed by a few well known Bombay doctors at a meeting in this city recently held under the auspices of the Rationalist Association of India. The Association certainly never expected such a large number of people to come. The Blavatsky Lodge in which the meeting was held was packed to its utmost and hundreds went away disappointed as no seat or standing place could be found. All classes of the population were seen at the meeting and among them there was a large percentage of Roman Catholics. What impressed one most was the large number of ladies present. They were mostly young people who probably begin to understand that it is a serious question that concerns their future as no other can. If they had come to learn what some experienced doctors had to say on the question, they were surely not disappointed as the evil and folly of excessive birth rate was discussed in all its aspects. In the daily papers also lively controversies took place in which most of the writers were in favour of Birth Control. The few old fashioned croakers, evidently inspired by some Roman Catholic priests, who tried to exhibit their familiar objections against it were easily overpowered and silenced.

* * *

It amazes one how ridiculous these antiquated bigots can be. Most of them base their objections against Birth Control on purely religious ground. They know nothing about it but only repeat

what they have heard priests say against it. Priests have told them that it is sinful and immoral to prevent procreation, and they imagine that it is right and proper to support such views. These people, including their priests and ministers, have no doubt their own queer ideas of what is immoral and sinful and what is not. They seem to think that they have the monopoly to impose their benighted views on everybody. Fortunately there is an increasingly large numbers of people who refuse to be influenced by the erroneous ideas of priests and bigots on the question. These people rightly look upto scientists and other experienced persons to enlighten them on the subject. Many have learnt by bitter experience that priests are very ready to encourage reckless breeding but are very reluctant to give any help when starving wretches appear at their door clamouring for help. Not a few shrewd ones have just begun to recognize that the object of the churches in encouraging reckless breeding, especially among the poorer and less intelligent classes, is to see that the number of worshippers does not decrease,—again, a question of vested interest.

* * *

During the interesting controversy on Birth Control which took place in the columns of "The Times of India" a passage at arms took place between an Anti-Birth Controlist and a Pro. The former, after the familiar objections and usual vituperations against his opponents, dramatically declared that if Birth Control was generally adopted man would fall to the level of the beast. He was promptly answered as he deserved. He was asked: "What was more immoral and sinful, what degraded a man more to the level of the beast reckless

breeding like the animals of the lower order without the slightest consideration for the welfare of the offsprings or the humane consideration that an individual has no right to bring forth children unless he can rear them decently and safely? Needless to say the great upholder of religious morality had to shut up.

* * *

The daily papers reported that the Canara Catholic Association, at a meeting, strongly protested against the idea of Government encouraging the institution of Birth Control clinics as it was against Catholic doctrines. The same dailies also reported that the Ladies Association of Guzerat, at a meeting held in Ahmedabad, strongly supported the idea of introducing Birth Control clinics and urged the Government to encourage the same. In the first case we see a number of bigots voicing the views of their priests; in the second we see a number of women who, acting on what experience has taught them, urging a measure which they are sure would lessen the evil of excessive breeding. Birth Control will soon become universal despite the futile opposition of religious fanatics and those Governments which have an eye on the proper provision of food for cannon.

* * *

According to News agents, the breaking of a silver hammer, with which Herr Hitler was going to open a public edifice in the presence of a distinguished company, scared him so much that he could not even deliver his speech on the occasion. Who can doubt after this that we have really reverted to the Middle Ages when signs and portents used to alarm a whole nation. Herr Hitler's conscience is overloaded and as he seems to be a

superstitious person such "unlucky" accidents throw him off his balance.

* * *

Prayers were offered at the Chowpaty seaface for the recovery of Mr. Vithalbai Patel when he was lying seriously ill in Europe. According to reports he was suffering from heart and kidney troubles, most likely the natural result of wear and tear owing to age. Yet, a number of intelligent persons in Bombay convened a meeting to offer prayers for his recovery. Do these people really believe in the efficacy of prayers, that the health of individuals is under the control of a capricious deity who can be swayed by prayers? Do they also believe that the same capricious deity causes the seasons, rain and sunshine, famine and storms, wars and pestilence? If not, what was the object of these useless prayers? Were they made simply to impress Mr. Vithalbai that his friends here care so much for him? If these good people really believe in the efficacy and power of prayer why not pray also for the removal of Hitler, Mussolini and the Pope?

* * *

Bradlaugh's Centenary dinner at the Trocadero Hotel in London in September last was a great success. Many distinguished persons attended it and some well known speakers eulogized the great work Bradlaugh did in the cause of Freedom of Thought, and political emancipation in England. Among the speakers were the Right Hon'ble Josiah C. Wedgewood, M. P., D. S. O., Lord Horder, the eminent English physician, Lord Snell, Sir John Hammerton, Prof. Gilbert Murray, Mr. H. G. Wells, Mr. W. R. Sickert, A. R. A., Mr. Chapman Cohen, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, Mr. Vivian Philips, Dr. Alfred Cox and Mrs.

Janet Chance. With the exception of the Manchester Guardian and one or two dailies, the English Press only gave prominence to Bradlaugh's Parliamentary activities and little or nothing was said about his great work in the cause of Freethought and Atheism. The Press in England is still very much afraid to mention anything in connection with Freethought in their columns.

* * *

Like the true Roman Catholic that he is, Hitler, after his odious persecution of the Jews, has now banned books on Darwinism in Germany. Reuter, who announces us this news, also tells us that the Catholics of Germany are now claiming absolute freedom for the Catholic press and liberty to Catholic organisations to pursue their activities unhindered. Hitler is sure, of course, to grant that. The Nazis being nothing else than Roman Catholics, one must expect a thorough reign of medievalism in Germany so long that this man is allowed to pursue his reckless career.

The intense Catholic propaganda against Birth Control, like an evil and ugly thing, raised its hideous head at the Bombay Municipal Corporation the other day where a Roman Catholic doctor managed to get a motion to establish Birth Control clinics in the city defeated. One, of course, could not expect anything better from the Bombay Municipal Corporation after its memorable treatment of a motion to deal scientifically with the "kutchra" problem of Bombay. While in England eminent physicians like Sir James Barr, Lord Horder, Lord Dawson of Penn and many other distinguished and eminent persons advocate Birth Control, here, in Bombay, obscure and ignorant Catholic doctors prate about the immorality of it and raise other ridiculous objections against a measure that sooner or later must be adopted all over the world. Incidentally this ludicrous Bombay objection against B. C. shows us that the Indian Roman Catholics are the most bigoted and priest ridden people in the world.

RATIONALISM AND THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

It is a common impression among the Hindu Sanatanists (the orthodox) that the Bhagavad-Gita is the source of theistic inspiration. Back of it is the belief that it was delivered by Sri Krishna on the battlefield (Kurukshetra) to dispel doubt that arose in the mind of Arjuna regarding the propriety of the tangle of war. And as the former is regarded as a divine incarnation, human logic endows the sanctity of theistic faith in the Lord's Song. It is however worth while to consider whether the Gita affords the basis for a natural philosophy apart from supernatural interpretations that

it has received at the hands of later commentators. That it has room for the Vedantic doctrine as expounded by Sankaracharya is obvious. The frequent use of Maya is confirmatory of the Vivarta-vadr, Brahman being the one reality, all else mere illusion. But that is not to say that the Gita does not lend itself to other schools of thought. Its affinity to Parinama (evolution) which endows nature with the sanctity of the divine spirit in which all objects live, move and have their being, and are thus themselves real, has been brought out by Sri Ramanuja. The world is a

reality, no more illusion. But superimposed on the reality of the world which is apparently phenomenal, there is the super-reality of the ordaining Power the dweller in Moksha (liberation), the Changeless and Formless.

Obviously the Song is meant to epitomise the systems of Hindoo philosophy, though the two branches of the Uttara Mimamsa would appear to have it all for themselves. There is no special reason why it should be confined to either the Advaita or Visistadvaita mode of teaching, when it serves Geimini's Purva Mimamsa as well. (Cf. Gita, Ch. III) An overstressed importance laid on ritual would lead to an utter unconcern with the existence of God, as good acts should in themselves result in liberation. Thus with the Sankhya of Kapila, the Yoga of Patanjali, and the atomic theories in the Nyaya and Vaisesika systems the Gita is well in agreement. One illustration from chapter two will bring out the non-recognition of the supernatural in the Gita. (Verse 28)

Avyaktadini bhutani vyakta madhyani
Bharat

Avyakta nihhanyeva tatraka

Paridevana.
(Bhagavad Gita, II, 28)

(Beings are unmanifest in origin, manifest in the middle state, O, Arjuna, unmanifest alike in the end, why, then, grieve ?)

The reference to Vyakta Prakriti and avyakta prakriti is transparant, and the naturalistic interpretation of the evolution of life taught by Kapila is 'made easy'. Again.

Siddhyasiddhye samo bhutva samatvam
yoga uchyate (Gita, II, 48) (Equilibrium

in attainment and non-attainment is called yoga.) Siddhi is the ideal of the Patanjalas. Instances are thus in abundance that render the Gita into an encyclopadia of the Shaddarshanas in Hindu thought. In boiling down the diverse systems into formal unity, though perhaps on no better basis than eclecticism, the service of the Song to the Indo-Aryan society cannot be overvalued. The process of assimilation is a natural factor alike in the growth of amœba, as in the shaping of metaphysical thought. How easily, imperceptibly, the diverse positions of the conflicting founders of these systems glide into one another, the poetic genius of the Gita is witness. No wonder that the Brahminical sociology of Hindu India that had been subjected to the spiritual guidance of manifold teachings clutched at the idea of their unification with relief, and a sense of enlightened gratification for being shown the path of allegiance to one doctrine put forth as having been the core, the essence, the centre of all the confusing diversities of philosophy.

Besides incorporating the six-systems in evolving a single path of practical philosophy, the Gita is not unmindful of doctrines beyond Brahminism. It is perhaps a mistake to suppose that it is in any way, even partial to the prevailing communal system of the land. Max Muller in his book "The six-systems of Indian Philosophy" has brought out that the antithesis in Indian life was between Brahmans and Samanas. These latter were Buddhists, that negatived the inequalities of caste. That the Gita has place for the Samanas, however much Brahminical appropriation may seek their exclusion therefrom, is borne out by the following stanza :

Vidya vinaya sampanne Brahmane
gavi hastini

Suni chaiva svapakecha panditah
sama darsinah.
(Gita, Ch. V. 18)

(The learned apprehend alike a Brahmin endowed with knowledge and humility a cow, an elephant, a dog, and the Paraih outcaste that makes a meal of it.) In the estimation of the Samanas, there is no preference between the Brahmin and the untouchable, just as there ought to be none between the cow and the dog. If Kapila was the seat of rationalism within the Shad-Darsanas in the Vedic compound, the sprouting of Buddhism beyond Vedic authority is the logical sequence of that rationalism. The process of assimilation already referred to had placed Kapila among the great Acharya (teachers) of the Vedic doctrine. While the same genius for appropriation elevated the Buddha into an incarnation of Vishnu. For the distinction between an Avatar and Acharya (divine incarnation and world-teacher) rests merely on the founding of a new knowledge (Veda) and the interpretation of existing scripture.

But the respect accorded to Baudhavatar as the essence of Vishnu, the Vedic deity did not save his doctrine in its concrete form. The Brahminical controversialists were not slow to perceive that once Vedic sanctity is outstripped, it meant the displacement of the vested interests of the Hindu religion. Thus we find the highest ethical background upon which the Buddha concentrated his teaching nicely transferred into Vedantic commentaries, a hazy outline alone being left over to mark the separateness of Vedic religion from the natural Buddhist philosophy. The next sloka (verses 19, Ch. V) illustrates my meaning.

Ihaiva tairjitah sargo yesham samye
sthitam manah

Nirdosham hi samam Brahma tasmāt
Brahmani te sthitah.

(Even on earth is Moksha or liberation won by them whose mind is balanced: Brahma, the Eternal, is incorruptible and balanced, and therefore, those who are established in balance are in the Eternal.) If by Brahma, the universe is understood, without offending the underlying idea, quite a system of natural philosophy is constructed. The macrocosmic sciences like astronomy have investigated the balancing power in the universe in its logical, mechanical aspect. The swinging of the planets in their slow-variant orbits, the imperturbability of the seasonal succession, the scarcity of catastrophic disturbance in astronomical bodies, and the tendency toward true adjustment on each occurrence create faith in the equipoise of the larger worlds, and the safety of the earth among them. The investigation under the microscope of chemical and bio-chemical action, as well as the sub-microphysical phenomena of electronic behaviour, and the study of the photons, reveals the marvellous propensities for adjustment, order, and certain evolution. Biological processes are today examined with a view to learn the mysteries of psychological development. The borderland between the sciences and philosophy is everyday getting more and more narrowed down.

It is no warranted strain on the language of the Gita to understand by its Brahman, no more than the natural balance that sustains the universe. Equipoise is the physical natural law. To swing in favour of a desired object, or to step away from an undesirable end is contrary to the indications of nature,

whose equipoise man cannot do better than imitate.

Those who hold the balance evenly between desire and hatred, Raga and Dvesha, are at an advantage in that their movement accords with the rotation of the events of the world. Just as one who swims down the stream has an advantage over another who seeks to face it, there is all the difference between one who is seated at the fulcrum and another clinging to the ups and downs of the swinging extrimities of love and hate. The attainment of the faculty to regain readily the equipoise when affected by the pleasurable or painful experiences in the world is a step in aid of liberation, the Moksha of the Vedantin, and the Siddhi of the Yogin. "Sparsan krutva bahir bahyam ..." (Gita Ch. V Sloka 27) The exclusion of external contacts that impinge on the senses is involved in the Yoga practice. Thus is concrete life made to approach the road leading up to the abstract, universal, from of existence. The individual eliminates his variable, special, experience and merges his consciousness in the contemplation of the universe.

This definition of the physical aspect of the Yoga practice follows close upon two verses resounding Buddhism. Nirvanam occurs in stanzas 25, & 26. Also "sarva bhuta hite ratah" in stanza 25 brings home the central doctrine of Buddhist ethics, Ahimsa, concern for the well-being of all lives. But the feeble echo is lost in the final confluence of the respective ideals that unite in the last verse (29) in that chapter (V).

Bhoktaram yegna tapasam sarvaloka
mahesweram
Suhridam sarva bhutanam gnatva mam
santi mritchehati

(If you know me as the swallower of sacrificial food-offering, and the receiver of all austerities, the great governor of all the worlds the lover of all forms of existence, you attain peace.)

Here, in this sloka, are seated in order, the purva-mimamsika, with his vedic ritual and sacrifice, and his ideal consumes the food-offering next to him is the Patanjala Yogi, and his Tapas, austerity, and meditation reaches its ideal; there is the vedic Iswera, the ruler of the worlds, common to all the theistic Darshanas; there is Divinity involved in love, and in those varied ideals, viewed together, man attaineth peace, Santi, born of knowledge (Gnatva, having known.)

The emphasis placed on Gnana (knowledge) is unequivocal.

Nahi guanena sadrisam pavitramiha
Vidyate
Tatsvayam yogasamsiddham kalena-
tmani vindati
(Ch. IV, 38.)

(Nothing is so sacred in this world as wisdom. That, the Yogi will himself find in time, having attained perfection.)

If wisdom is the supreme thing to strive for, scientific pursuits have the premier place on them. The knowledge attainable by science discloses the real nature of the universe in all its changing forms of life and being. Wisdom resting on science is true knowledge. All else is illusion, the product of imagination unrelated to the facts of life. Our best philosophers are poets leaping forward ahead of life, indicating theories of experience which the slow machine of science puts later to the test. Truth reveals itself in this slovenly process of verification. But the impulse that

prompts the poet, and the philosopher is the same at bottom as the genius which enables the acute scientist to frame a correct hypothesis to work upon. Both plunge deep into the mysteries of existence and lift up to the world's gaze the gems that lie hidden in the waters of immensity and eternity. To-day there is no greater poet living than Einstein that discovered the tune of the shifting perihelion of Mercury, and sang rising to the pitch attained by the propagation of light curvilinearly in gravitational fields. His poem on relativity is the marvel note of the present century, whose improvement on the mechanical notions of the last, will endure to earn the gratitude of succeeding ones.

The way to this wisdom is shown thus:

Sraddhavan labhate gnanam tatparah
samyatendriyah

Gnanam labdhva param santimachire
Nadhigachchati.

Ch. IV, 39

(He who has faith, persevering, and having controlled the senses, gains wisdom. And thereafter soon attains peace.)

Faith is the pre-requisite of wisdom. Faith, in what? It is the assurance in the truth, the reality of the knowledge attained. Nothing is more disastrous than misplaced faith. One ought to be intent upon attaining wisdom, and one ought to be sure that what is attained is real wisdom. Concentrating upon that, one should discard, sacrifice, subordinate the cravings of one's senses. Knowledge ought to be preferred to the pleasures of life. And once, such knowledge is attained, there is all the Santi, peace, Brahmonirvanam, or Brahmanandam, mentioned elsewhere.

Next follows the bullet that the theist thinks gives the fatal shot on the agnostic.

Agnaschasraddadbanascha samsyatma
vinasyati

Nayam lokosti na parona sukham
samsayatmanah.

Ch. IV, 40.

(The ignorant, unpersevering faithless doubting self is destroyed. There is no happiness for the doubting self in this world, nor the other.

Apparently it is a serious blow to the religion of doubt.

But humanity is stronger than to be scared away by the threat. Doubting self is destroyed, as much and no more than the believing self. If destruction is Moksha, liberation from individual limitations, well, it is preferable to another state that remains undestroyed. Verily, the horrors of the depicted hell have little hold on the destroyed self. Besides, how could the doubting self be evolved from an undoubting, certain Principle, or Brahman? And if this doubter is an entity outside the jurisdiction of Iswera, how can this real entity be ever destroyed? If this doubt were the result of illusion or Maya, upon whom or what did this Maya work to bring out the state of doubt? Turning to the Visistadwaitin, if the loving Mahavishnu evolved my doubting self, on whom does the responsibility rest? How does the sustainer expect his devotee to lift the veil that was not of his making? If the doubter is liable to destruction, that which was the root cause of doubt is alike impermanent.

And next, as to happiness. The pursuit of truth is no bed of roses. Man has sacrificed and will yet sacrifice happiness

in ever so many worlds for the sake of realising the truth. Contentment before knowledge is the fool's paradise. Doubt until light clears up life's problems is the one natural state of the human mind. The quest, the capacity to raise doubt is the test of real, active life, a life given to learning, an ambition to attain the ideal of true wisdom. It would be doing violence to the spirit of the Gita to interpret this sloka in its apparent sense. Elsewhere it repeats the caution to be unmindful of happiness, to detach from the soft bed of Sukham, and ignore Duhkham, misery. It is the mood of hesitancy at every step that is condemned. When you act, be sure whether you act one way or the other, not falter between the hit and the miss. Do not act in ignorance, blindly, and without sraddha, the assurance that you are acting thus or otherwise. The doubtful self fails of its purpose. It isn't blessed in this world, or in the next.

Applying this to the position of theistic belief, an argument is founded that doubt is the worst thing to do. But the certitude of the supernatural Iswara is given to none. I am not here drawing the nice distinctions between the personal, impersonal, super-personal divinities of the diverse sections of theistic faiths. Leaving personality aside, the designing providence is never beyond the range of doubt. To condemn the plain statement of truth is blasphemy. Mankind has no doubt, as it ought to have none, that the knowledge attainable by man never outgrows doubt. If I am certain that I may never clear my doubt, am I a doubting self (samsayatma) or its opposite, nischitatma? While I am engaged in the search for truth, am I contented and happy, or is discontent and weariness written on my brow? It is

one of the eternal paradoxes so very often met with not in the Gita alone but in the religious books of different faiths that there is nothing tending to greater happiness and bliss than the search for truth. There is for the enlightened, a happiness in the very quest, in probing for knowledge; in the toil of pursuit there is peace, in the pain of effort there is happiness, and in the discontent arising from the knowledge of our limitations there is real contentment. I have no doubt that the Gita means much more than what its theistic interpreters would give us out of it.

Even earlier than the Gita, in what is usually called the Sutra-period, Hindu thought had raised *doubt* into a religion. "Athatho Brahma Jignasa." with this, the Brahma Sutra begins *the quest for Brahman*. If the knowledge of God were a certitude, Jignasa would be out of place. But as pointed out by Max Muller (Six Systems of Hindu Philosophy) the idea of pursuit, enquiry, in this context is in sharp contrast from other branches of learning where the Sutras are more confident and assertive. The condemnation of the religion of doubt in the Bhagvad-Gita (Ch. IV, 40) cannot be taken at its face value as overruling even the method of the Vedanta. Mankind is yet in search after the true meaning of the Brahman.

Anyway, atheism that has learnt to sweep aside the cobwebs of supernaturalism from the machinery of the scientific mind is beyond the range of the gun aimed at the agnostic. (Samsayatma, Gita, VI, 40.)

Gnana vigana triptatma kutastho
vijitendriyah

Yukta ityuchyate yogi sama lostasma
kanchanah.

(Gita, VI, 8.)

(The Yogi who has acquired knowledge and wisdom to his contentment, immovable, having controlled the pleasures of the senses, and who does not choose between mud, stone, and gold is said to be equipoised). Scientific knowledge and philosophical wisdom are not two things apart. Science is a method, and it is fallacious to attribute to it petrification, which the modern text-book mode of teaching it involves. There are no fundamental tenets for the scientist, whose truth is ever viewed relatively to environments in time and space. Speculative rambles in the forests of the Absolutes, Infinities, Eternities, and Verities are left alone, as speculations beyond the possibility of experience. Even at that, modern science is verging on the philosophical, pointing to the unity of electronic agglomeration in the atoms composing mud, stone and gold, and the similarity between proton-electron relation and the solar system or even inter-stellar-space. Harmonised by the treasure of knowledge, rich in the possession of the vast universe, the knower (scientist) is the highest Yogi, rock-seated and immovable in his assurance that, for his mental, social and ethical evolution, no extraneous agency of fear or patronage need be invented. The cry that morality will get ruined on the dethronement of God is a childish misapprehension. The appeal of humanity is sounder than the ethics based on supernatural fear. The latter drops when ignorance is exposed to light, while secular morality improves with the advance of culture.

Sreyan dravyamayadyegnat gnana
yegnah Parantapa

Sarvam karmakhilam Partha gnane
parisamapyate
(Gita, IV, 33)

(Higher than the ritual, sacrifice, with rich provisions, is the ritual of wisdom. All religious acts in their entirety are absorbed in the end in wisdom.) The highest aim of all activity, which religious rites symbolise (Yegnadi karmas) is the attainment of wisdom. True wisdom proceeds from correct knowledge. Correct knowledge is the perception of scientific truth. The atheist cannot compromise against truth. His watchful brain has no place for more expedients, makeshifts. The argument that it would be safer to assume Existence and act on that basis has really no place on earth. To assume the non-existent and to build thereon would be building in the air. There is no greater safety in an unwarranted assumption. On the other hand the danger of truth drawing on mistaken notions at the bottom of social morals far outweighs the temporary utility that any idol may have. To assume that falsehood, even for sometime, will help mankind towards social and aesthetic progress is to reverse our ideas about progress itself. The atheist can never agree that what is reared on the footing of the scaffolding of untruth may ever stand true. Remove the scaffold, the whole structure comes to the ground. The highest morality is that which is independent of arbitrary assumptions and authority, and which accords with human experience. All right conduct is controlled ultimately by knowledge and knowledge alone. If not the result of active deliberate choice springing from an appreciation of relevant circumstances, even right acts do not amount to true conduct, but perhaps lucky chance-hits, if not the deeds of a slavish automation.

The argument from design is the stronghold of theistic acclamation of the universe. When science weaves out

what are styled LAWS, the theist brings in the Cosmic Legislator. Apart from the harmonious pairings of the wolf and the lamb, man-eater and man, lion and elephant, the volcano, the hurricane, earthquake, stellar disruption, and star-dusts, the supreme intelligence has evolved the human mind far ahead of its own achievement. The real thinker fails to explain superlative perfection in terms of progress. The Absolute, the Unconditioned may have nothing to attain, no object to gain, no scope for the progressive realisation of any ideal beyond Itself. For above It, there can be nothing. It is a contradiction in terms to say that God, the Perfect One, is actuated by design, that the Omnipotent has an end to attain, that the Omnipresent runs after an ideal to be realised *in future*, and that the Omniscient has plans to work upon.

That the progressive realisation of even self-governing institution is farther away from the Godhead the following sloka bears out.

Na me Partha sti kartavyam trishu
lokeshu kinchena
Nana vaptam avaptavyam varta
evacha karmani.
(Gita, III, 22).

(I am bound to do nothing. O, Partha, and in the three worlds there is not to be attained, being left unattained. Yet, I am quick with life.)

Two thousand years of western theism, nor its elder oriental brother, has not cast off the primitive habit of praising the Lord for his wondrous skill in framing the cosmos, unmindful of the preliminary issue framed between opposing combatants, virtue and vice, heat and cold, light and darkness, pleasure and pain, life and death, disease and health. We hold out loud promise of design, and when we go into trial, we seek to escape

by the backdoor of mystery, as the ways of God are "inscrutable." It matters not whether we write God, or another word in that place, so long as the mystery is there, the inscrutability remains. The Gita is saner than its designing exponents :

Na mam karmani limpanti na me
karma phale sprusha
(Gita, IV, 14)

(The acts of creation etc. do not affect me. Nor do I desire the fruit of action.)

And again, not only is the idea of design totally excluded from the brain of Krishna, the 'I' of the Gita, the Brahman of the Vedantin, but even the responsibility for emanating similar ideas in the human mind, as to agency, acts, and their correlation with the fruit of action is expressly left over to nature.

Na kartrutvam na karmani lokasya
srijati prabhn
Na karmaphala samyogam swabhavastu
pravartate.
(Gita, V, 14.)

(The Lord produceth not the notion of agency, nor actions, nor the relative fruit; these result from nature). If this answer of the Gita is not sufficient to disabuse the minds of the pious expectants of either of the two schools, of self-realisation of the Godhead by the Godhead, and the realisation of Divine Manhood by the commonplace man, it at least tends to mellow some of the eloquence spent in proving the existence of God by His designs by future achievements. If, personality, or no personality, the existence of God were to depend upon his designs which the apologists so often are loud in proclaiming, these designs are as weak, in fact, as the texts in their support are highly dubious, if not certain in the contrary sense.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

(To be continued.)

THE OPEN MIND

Most people's minds resemble nothing so much as a lumber-room or an old curiosity shop. They are a medley of antiquated ideas, silly superstitions, queer pre-judices and decayed dogmas with, perhaps, a few scraps of science thrown in. There is no room here for new ideas; in here it is so dusty, cobwebby and stuffy that the light of reason can scarcely penetrate.

It is seldom indeed that one meets, even among the educated, a person with an open mind. One thinks of the average educated men of one's acquaintance—lawyers, doctors, engineers, professors and their class; one tries to get any of them interested in a fresh point of view on things that matter, on fundamental questions that is, regarding morality, religion art, life and so on; one endeavours to put a single new idea across their mental threshold; but it is amazingly difficult, almost an impossibility. Their mental doors are banged to, barred and bolted; their mental windows shut and secured against any such intrusion. Can one call these men 'educated' in the proper sense of the term? Learned they may be, even acute in their way, apt at their particular businesses, but educated they certainly are not.

Education is no mind-opener. On the contrary, education as we know it in this country, can best be described as a series of walling-up and roofing-in operations. The child's free and open mind, as he grows up, is gradually converted into a stuffy little cell, chokeful of a great deal of useless learning while he goes on acquiring what the parents wish, the teachers impress, the text books say, the examiners require and—that is the limit.

It is, if one observes it, a process of 'learning' or merely absorbing knowledge most of the time, hardly, if ever, of 'thinking for himself'. To exercise his cerebral cells, to use his independent judgment, to dare to be original in thought, are activities which, needless to say, his educators, who themselves hardly know any better, not only do not encourage in him, but deliberately fight shy of. They prefer to cram his brains as their own were crammed—beyond repair. The utmost that an apologist for this kind of education could say in its defence would be to point to its commercial value as a means to a place or a career. But what a paltry conception of its purpose!

Nothing short of a mental spring-cleaning will do for adults damaged by this type of education. The doors and windows of their minds must be thrown wide open, a thorough sweep made of every bit of the intellectual rubbish that litters them and the clear light of reason allowed to stream in. But it will take a lot of doing.

For this involves, at the outset, a great many rejections and refusals, and it is well frankly to recognise the serious impediments to an open mind. To discard years-long habits of thought demands a certain amount of mental agility. But already education or rather mis-education has robbed the cerebral cells of its original vigour; the energy needed to think out things has been perceptibly diminished. Add to this superimposed incapacity the natural mental laziness of the average man, and his many pre-occupations with day-to-day affairs, such as home, business, society and sport. To think is to take time and trouble: but how few will take either, even when they can!

Further, so mixed up is a man's thinking life with his sentiments and feelings that he acquires in the course of years a curious collection of pet ideas, pet theories, pet beliefs, pet aversions and what not. For, as he grows older, beliefs, tastes, theories and ideas begin to assume, through wont and use, recurrence and emphasis, association and partisanship, a sentimental value and an emotive force they had not possessed before. They begin to display the seal of a fancied excellence they cannot be easily stripped of. One notices the effect in its less objectionable form in the soothingly stimulating influences of a cult or a circle such as Theosophy or a Mutual Admiration Society. The same effect, in its cruder form, is to be observed in the extravagant claims of fanatics of all sorts: teetotallers, jingoes, nudists, strict vegetarians, imperialists and others of similar invincible convictions.

Men, again, become the more or less willing victims of their Religion and Community, which constitute a double line of defence against the advance of Reason. Not only on the ignorant masses but on the so-called educated too, religious sanctions such as the threat of an Eternity of pain or of an infinite series of inferior rebirths exert a powerful check. And curiously, this check is less effective in their conduct than in their thought: men dare to live wickedly in spite of Hell, but they dare not question the truth of their religious doctrines. Those whom empty terrors, evil spirits, tormenting fiends, blood-thirsty deities and their ilk fail to terrify succumb to the more urgent, because more real, fear of ostracism by the Community, should they challenge its rules and regulations, however stupid and unjust these be. The vast majority of men, blindly, deafly and dumbly,

conform to the precepts and practices of their creed and class, and many-millions alas! in a country like ours where religion and community are so closely identified are turned into bigots of the most vile and virulent type, whose minds are narrowed and glued and stuck fast and forever blocked to the influence of Reason.

Although, obviously, our best hope lies in the younger generation, we must keep on attacking the orthodoxies of the people, if only to let the young folk know that all is not sound and well in places where the ripest wisdom is supposed to dwell. It will be no easy task. For, to rationalise the irrational man implies a difficult dual process of making him unlearn and relearn. First, as has been hinted at, what has been painfully learnt and acquired has to be more painfully unlearned and discarded. Then, things have to be learnt anew. Essential to this process are intelligence, honesty, and courage—the intelligence to recognise an error as an error, the honesty completely to reject it, the courage, having known to think rightly, to act rightly, damning the consequences. Very few arrive at this last stage: most folks's courage when they come to patterning their conduct on reason, seems to ooze out at their toes. Even refraining from an action understood to be meaningless appears to present a difficulty. Hence one occasionally comes across the somewhat ridiculous figure-fleckless creature of a domestic compromise—of a church-going atheist husband or a sceptical Hindu talking a ceremonial dip in the Ganges.

All this leads us to insist that the open mind is a rare phenomenon, and that no person can be truly called rational whose mind is a closed one. The rational man, the man with an open mind, has certain

characteristics which at once distinguish him from the crowd. He never dogmatizes for he is never cocksure; in speech he is free from pedantry, in conduct from priggishness; a contrary opinion cannot shock him easily nor an erratic action quite scandalise him; he can tolerate everything except intolerance, and even this he can intellectually account for; new ideas if true, find him receptive, as old ideas if false, do not bind him at all; in brief, nothing that is dusty, cobwebby or stuffy can have a place in his thinking life. Something in his very physiognomy, the open countenance, the alert expression, the clear eye, bespeak

the man of reason; whereas in his dull and muddy features the inner confusion of a fool or a fanatic is unmistakably stamped and made manifest. It is the tragedy of the world that there are too many fools and fanatics about. It would have been an unrelieved tragedy were there not a few open minded men. On these few and on their efforts in the teeth of tremendous obstacles to abolish the fools and fanatics—to make clean and quick work of them with the two-edged sword of reason and ridicule hangs the hope of a better and more rational world.

R. R. SRESHTA.

✓ OUR RISHIS KNEW EVERYTHING!

Indeed, how could they not? They had only to close their eyes, forget the outside world and, concentrating their minds of introspective contemplation, visualize whatever truth there was, had been or could ever be. Past, present and future, everything was known to them from A to Z. The modern man, in his ignorance of these wonderful introspective methods, is inclined to give credit to modern science for some important discoveries and inventions. But is not even an aeroplane mentioned in the Ramayana? The one modern discovery which is supposed to have dealt the greatest blow to orthodoxy, the Theory of Evolution, is supposed to have been discovered by Lamarck and later popularised by Darwin. But we need not look to Europe for this theory. If at all it is true (mark that 'if'!), we find ample proof of it in the Hindu religion. Of course if it is not true, we can equally well disprove it from the same

inexhaustible source of knowledge! But as most people seem to believe it nowadays, let us see how our rishis knew it.

Consider the series of ten Hindu incarnations of God, who, according to some, is the same for all religions. The first incarnation was "Matsya", a fish, i.e. a water animal, which is admittedly the first stage in Evolution. The second was "Kurma", a tortoise, an animal which can live both on land and in water. The third was "Varaha", a boar, which is entirely a land animal. The fourth, "Nrisinha", was a lion with a human head, something between man and the lower animals. The fifth was "Vamana", meaning a pigmy, not yet full grown man. The sixth was "Parashurama", whose weapon was the axe, a cruel savage, as will be seen later. The next one was "Rama", who was brave, but rather weak-minded, a simple soul who could be easily led. The next was

"Krishna", a past-master of intrigue, amorous and political. The next was "Buddha", the founder of Buddhism. The last incarnation, "Kalki", is yet to come. Who can say that this series of ten incarnations is not an out-standing instance of the Theory of Evolution? Of course unimportant links have been omitted, but what can you expect in a summary?

These Avatars were evidently invented in the Pauranic period, as there is no trace of them in the Vedas. One of them, Krishna, the author of the Bhagavadgita which is supposed to embody the Hindu religion, and the only Avatar who recognizes himself as God, has given a definition of an Avatar in a couple of famous verses in which he says: When religion wanes and irreligion is rampant, then do I incarnate myself in the world to protect the good, destroy the wicked, and re-establish religion. It would be interesting to examine whether the different Avatars really correspond to this description given by one of them.

The first three Avatars, being lower animals, may perhaps be excused if they do not, though God might have been a little more careful in describing in his own acts. The "Fish" only fished up the Vedas from somebody who had stolen them. The "Tortoise" supported the Earth which was sinking into the sea! The "Boar" used its tusks to bring up the Earth which had already sunk this time! The "Lion-Man" only lived a few hours, appearing suddenly out of a pillar in order to protect his devotee by killing his cruel father who had made himself a nuisance to the world. The Avatar had nothing further to do. The reason for the fifth Avatar was that the gods were afraid of Bali and

wanted to get rid of him, though he was not at all a wicked man. The Hindu gods are mortally afraid when anybody becomes too righteous, lest he should displace them. So the god Vishnu (the only one of the Hindu Trinity who consents to come to the earth as an incarnation) became the "Dwarf" and went to Bali who was performing a sacrifice and asked for as much land as he could cover in three steps. Bali, though strongly advised not to grant the request, immediately granted it and the Dwarf assumed an enormous form and covered everything with two steps and claimed room for his third step. Bali, with foolish generosity, and just to keep his word, offered his head for the third step and sunk under the weight. This was a dirty trick played by the Dwarf and Bali could easily have accused him of cheating and asked him to clear out. But Bali insisted on keeping his word even with a cheat, and suffered in consequence. This Avatar is nothing like Krishna's description. The next one, "Parashurama", beheaded his mother with an axe at the bidding of his father, and later on, because a Kshatriya killed his father exterminated the Kshatriya race 21 times in revenge. He seems to have done nothing else of any importance in his life and does not at all seem to conform to the description of an Avatar. The next Avatar, "Rama" was apparently born in the lifetime of Parashurama, since an encounter between the two has been described in the Ramayana, in which the newer Avatar makes the older one confess defeat, curious to say the least. Rama did protect rishis from demons and destroy the wicked Ravana and so act up to the description of an Avatar. But he was hopelessly weak-minded and this

made him commit three crimes: he stealthily shot an arrow at Vali who was not fighting with him or even aware of his presence; he abandoned his wife to please his subjects, even when he knew her innocent; and he beheaded Shambuka, who was supposed to have caused the death of a Brahmin boy by practising penance to which he, a Shudra, was not entitled. If Rama had any sense of justice, he was too weak to give any effect to it. The next one was Krishna himself the author of the description given. He was a contrast to Rama, was an expert in all kinds of intrigue, was never nonplussed, and is popularly known for his 16,108 wives and innumerable love-affairs, though it is the fashion to pretend that they were spiritual. He is, however, the subject of countless love-songs which belie this pretence. On the battlefield, he helped the Paudavas against their cousins and when one of them hesitated on the ground of this relationship, advised him to go ahead and not be afraid as it was all prearranged by God (himself) and they were only instruments. When another brother hesitated to tell a lie which would give them an advantage, Krishna urged him to consider victory more

important than truthfulness. The poor man suffered for this later, but the victory was gained. Is this justice, righteousness, benevolence? The next Avatar, Buddha, seems to have been the only one out of the whole lot who at least tried his best to do no harm. He did not recognize the existence of God or "soul", and it is difficult to understand how he ever came to be admitted into the series of Hindu Avatars. He really founded a different religion, which has hardly anything in common with Hinduism, whatever Mahatma Gandhi may say. The only possible explanation of his admission into the Hindu fold seems to be that enormous numbers having been converted to Buddhism, Hinduism was afraid of disappearing altogether and had to play this trick in order to include Buddhists among Hindus and thus nominally keep up its numerical strength. Even an atheist as an Avatar of God does not apparently seem absurd to religious eyes. The tenth Avatar is yet to come and so nothing can be said about him. It is predicted that he will destroy all the irreligious people in the world and then the whole cycle will start again!

R. D. KARVE.

THE FUTURE OF RATIONALISM IN EUROPE.

In the concluding chapter of his well known book, "The Dynamics of Religion" the late Mr. J. M. Robertson, discussed exhaustively the causes that keep religion alive in the West despite the destructive criticism that has undoubtedly sapped the very foundation of Christianity there. While he recognised that enlightenment has not yet penetrated every strata of society, and consequently the masses, even in the most advanced countries of Europe, have, as yet no idea of what rational discussion has done to undermine the creed, he believed that the political situation and the economic conditions were even more potent than mere credulity to keep religion going. Few thoughtful persons will dispute this sound opinion.

A careful study of the progress of Christianity in Europe for the last four hundred years, especially since the beginning of the last century, would convince any unbiassed person of the truth of Mr. Robertson's opinion. We all know that with the advent of the Reformation, Catholicism, which hitherto had held overwhelming sway in Europe, received one of the greatest blows it ever had during the course of its eventful career. It soon became apparent that Northern Europe was for secession, while the Southern stuck fast to Rome. This anomaly has been explained in many ways: the stern temperament of the Northerners who loathed the corruption of the Catholic Clergy, its trafficking and abominable superstitions, their readiness to reject the claims and pretensions of Rome and so forth; while the adherence of the Southerners to Rome was explained by the gay and frivolous disposition of the

Latin Races, their ignorance and superstitious nature, their love of pomp and pageantry, and, above all, the success of the Jesuits who stemmed in time this serious revolt against the Mother Church. The real fact, however, is that the political factor alone explains the progress of that mighty upheaval in that religion. The truth is that the people of the different countries concerned simply followed the inclination of their princes, and let the intellectual consideration severely alone. Where the king remained Catholic it was only natural that the Aristocracy would follow suit and the masses do likewise. On the other hand, where the king became a Protestant, Catholicism had no ghost of a chance despite the efforts of all the Jesuits in the world. In France, the Royal edict against the Huguenots alone effectively checked the progress of Protestantism though a good number of enlightened Frenchmen had embraced this new creed from conviction. The Massacre of St. Bartholomew planned by Royalty and the Church rapidly completed what the ordinances were slow to accomplish. In Germany and in England, Catholicism had no chance because their Sovereigns had espoused the cause of Protestantism. The religious wars in Europe are a blot on the history of mankind, as millions lost their lives simply to enable a few ambitious princes and ecclesiastics to hold firmly their sway over a besotted population. It is doubtful whether any body in the West would now be anxious to have his bones broken for the sake of religion, though great efforts are being made by interested parties every where to throw us again into the Mediaeval Ages. Though the age of

fanaticism is certainly over in Europe, and not likely to come back, despite the desperate efforts of the present Pope to bring it back again, it is a fact that the majority of the people there are, on account of defective education (by which we mean a complete ignorance of scientific knowledge) still credulous and conform to the modes of thought of the past. It is also a fact that though a vast number has become indifferent to religion, it still submits to the dictates of the Churches through fear of letting known its unbelief. On the contrary, these people behave exactly as if they still hold religion as a creditable doctrine and are afraid to withhold their support to the Church as it may imperil their interests. Many cultured people patronize the Churches, whatever may be their personal belief, because "they have a sentiment for ceremony and adoration, for pomp of procedure and solemnity and stateliness of colour and sound" (Robertson.) They are the people who, as Robertson truly remarks, have little sense for truth and little depth of reflection whereby to raise and chasten their æsthetic leanings; there are others, too, "who are weary with affairs and craving a grace solace, people who satisfy the slight uneasiness of light natures concerning their frivolity by stated devotions; people who conform for gain; women feeding their emotions; men following after women." If to these we add the crowd of hypocrites who find religion a useful cloak to mask their own crooked nature, we see that even in this so-called age of enlightenment, the Churches can still depend on a great majority to carry on. Even in a country like France where Free Thought and sound general education are certainly more advanced than any where else in the world, one

must be careful not to include the whole of France in this forward movement. Unbelief prevails greatly in the big cities and towns, but what about the rural districts where bigotry and ignorance are still rampant? It is precisely in those parts of France that mysterious apparitions of the Virgin frequently confront peasant girls of a morbid disposition. Would Lourdes, for instance, be still flourishing if every one in France was as enlightened as he or she should be? That Lourdes will one of these days meet the fate of Our Lady of La-Salette, which fifty years ago was as popular as Lourdes for miraculous manifestations is certain. The religiously minded in France know well that La-Salette is now utterly discredited, yet they still believe that the story of Lourdes is true! From this one can realize how slow it is to enlighten people whose education is decidedly defective. If such is the case in France, what must it be in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Belgium and Austria where the country people are even still more benighted than they are in France! If such was not the case, it would be difficult to explain the success of Hitler and Mussolini in having a vast following which obey their behests so submissively. Little wonder that these two ambitious men have lost no time in making agreements with the Pope for the complete mental enslavement of their people. Were these Germans and Italians mentally emancipated, they assuredly would not have submitted so tamely to these two astute self-seekers who are rapidly throwing back their countries into a mediaeval time. Already Germany is waging a fierce war against the Jews, these centuries old victims of Christian fanaticism and bigotry, and the hostility of the Nazis towards Science and Free Thought is due

to the same cause. In Italy the methods of the Inquisition exist and are administered against all who dare oppose Mussolini and his Fascism. Incidentally the events actually happening in those two countries furnish a good lesson to India in her hopeless task of achieving political emancipation while still fettered with religious mental slavery.

As regard England, despite the assurance of that experienced English Rationalist, Mr. Frederic Gould, that England is making sound progress in Rationalism—is in fact in the forefront of the movement in the West—one is permitted to doubt the accuracy of this optimistic view. While it is true that bigotry and obscurantism are not exactly what they were fifty or sixty years ago, when Darwinism was fiercely assailed by the cultured people of that time, and Charles Bradlaugh and others were maliciously and shamelessly tracted by the clergy and the upper classes for their fight for political liberty and freedom of thought, it is nonetheless true that England is still a priest-ridden country, unable to free herself from the shackles of that powerful Church as by Law established. Were this not a fact it would have been impossible for those in power, for the clergy in particular, to impose so many absurd religious restrictions on an unwilling people. Would, for instance, a people, determined to free itself from religious chicaneries submit to the ridiculous Sunday observance which still prevails there? Would they permit the B. B. C. to treat them as school children with unwanted religious sermons on the Radio? Would the people pay the crushing religious taxes and the large amount for the

maintenance of the State Church? Would they pay the tithes and be compelled by law to do so? Would the so called Blasphemy Laws be still on the Statute Book? Would the Press be so servile to the Church, so afraid of the clergy as not to dare mention rationalistic topics in its columns? A large number of scientists is still to be found who conquette with religion to the extent of seriously assuring the public that the modern discoveries of physical science point to the truth of religion! We hear daily of the great progress that Methodism and Roman Catholicism are making in a land where religion is supposed to be waning. No doubt allowance must be made that Christianity has got a big start over Rationalism considering that till a hundred years ago, the latter was still in embryo. Great progress has undoubtedly been made, but the task is still formidable. When one remembers the immense wealth of the Churches, their great prestige and influence, the ability with which they can carry intensive propaganda with the support of the powers that be, their influence with royalty the politicians and the aristocracy, the unmistakable tendencies of dictators to introduce Roman Catholic methods in countries where they are all powerful, one cannot help thinking that the prospect of Rationalism, for the present, at least, is gloomy. It is possible that in this Rationalism is only following a natural course, for it is well known that intellectual progress does not follow a straight path; its progress is wave-like, and for aught we know we may be in a trough now instead of on a crest in the onward movement.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

In our last issue, we drew attention to the determined attempt of Catholic priests in this country to force the hands of the authorities not to establish Birth Control clinics for the benefit of those who desire knowledge how to restrict their family. In Madras these Catholic priests have been very active. There, they managed to get several insignificant

Catholic Associations to hold meetings of protest in which resolutions against the proposed measure were passed. One is glad to note that the public of Madras who are in favour of Birth Control did not take all these activities lying down. Against this misguided movement an influential meeting, under the auspices of the Neo-Malthusian League, The South

Indian National Association and The Theistic Endeavour Society, presided over by Sir Vepa Ramesan, a Judge of the Madras High Court, condemned the activities of these Roman Catholic bigots. Sir Vepa Ramesan exposed the tactics of these fanatics and severely trounced a Father Basenach, a German Jesuit, who appears to have been the leader of all these activities.

* * *

This Father Basenach had the audacity to say that all who advocated Birth Control were, "vile, filthy, immoral, vicious and utterly reprehensible people. Sir Vepa pointed out that among the numerous people that Father Basenach condemned so ruthlessly were such eminent persons like Lord Buckmaster, Lord Horder, Lord Dawson of Penn, the King's Physician, Sir William Arbuthnot, Dr. Norman Haire and others. Apart from that, says Sir Vepa, the House of Lords had debated the subject and given its sanction to the practice of Birth Control. Above all the Royal Family had signified their approval of it. "Were they all vile, disgusting and vicious" asked Sir Vepa Ramesan in biting sarcasm.

* * *

Here in Bombay, the Bombay Chronicle also denounced these crafty priests and protested against their dog-in-the-manger policy of trying to prevent others not of their persuasion to benefit in a measure calculated to do good to the people of this country. The Bombay public, to judge from the letters in the newspapers, are in favour of Birth Control; so are the people of Bengal. In Karachi, the Catholic women held a meeting of protest against Birth Control and it was reported that they were furious about it.

These poor deluded women! Unfortunately, women are everywhere the tools of priests. Among the Mahomedans, their women are, it appears, the sturdiest supporters of the purdah system! It is well known that it is owing to the opposition of women that no reform can take place in any religion. One of the greatest mistakes the young Spanish Republic has done is to allow Spanish women to vote. From the latest report, the priests have already gained round them and their interference in political matters may yet cause a great deal of trouble to that country.

* * *

In a case before a coroner in England, it was asserted that a woman suffering from cancer might have lived much longer had she listened to Sir Thomas Oliver her medical adviser. Unfortunately she fell under the influence of Scientists who treated her in their "spiritual manner" with the inevitable result that she died very soon. "These Christian Scientists," says the Coroner, "are very obstinate people, you can do nothing with them." It is certainly strange that in a country like England where the police have full powers to deal with many things that are believed to be against public interest, they allow such fanatics to endanger the lives of foolish people. No fortune teller can ply his trade openly in England; he will be prosecuted at once. No individual can run a lottery; the police will soon interfere. Yet Christian Scientists can and do flourish in that strange country. In France, La Loi de Germinal, an vii, on the illegal practice of Medicine, would deal with such cases most effectively. No one in France can undertake the cure of patients as a profession unless he is duly qualified

to practice medicine. The laws on this question are very strict there. Hence one never hears of such practitioners as Christian Scientists putting the lives of people in danger by their stupid belief that serious disease can be cured by prayers.

* * *

The Duke of Athol is very angry that the laws of England do not allow him to run a lottery to help the hospitals. When the question was debated in the House of Lords recently some noble Peers supported the Duke in condemning this ridiculous law. The Bishops, of course, did not agree with this condemnation. They feared that the morality of the people will be seriously affected if lotteries were allowed. This familiar cry of Churchmen regarding what is moral and what is not made a noble Lord very angry. He pointed out that France, Germany, Italy, Ireland and other countries permitted lotteries to be run and he sarcastically asked whether England was more moral than those countries. He ridiculed the hypocrisy of these bishops on the subject and truly remarked that if the laws were impartially administered on the question of lottery and raffle half the parsons of England would be in jail as the drawing of raffles was one of the favourite methods of parsons to raise money for the "Church". Evidently what is sauce for the goose is not sauce for the gander in England.

* * *

According to an Australian correspondent, Rationalism is making good progress there. We are glad to learn that there are two well patronized rationalist publications down there under the Southern Cross. One is the "Australian Rationalist" and the other the New Zealand

"Truth Seeker." It is inevitable that surely, though it may be slowly, Rationalism is bound to spread in a country like Australia where education is spreading. The classes which emigrated to Australia from the old country were very attached to their religion for the very reason that they were too down-trodden and ignorant to know better. Even now there are many religiously-minded people in Australia and the place has proved a perfect Eldorado for priests and persons. The new generation is gradually shaking off the superstitions of their forefathers and let us hope that before long Rationalism will be firmly established there.

* * *

It must be very galling to the fanatics who were responsible for the introduction of the Prohibition Acts in America to see the complete failure of their folly. The Americans are feverishly getting ready to celebrate the start of the "Whoopee Era" as they call the approaching time which will allow the sale of alcoholic drinks. This is to begin in February next. Millions of gallons of liquor have been ordered and trade is busy storing the precious liquids in warehouses. The experience that America has gained in her attempt to force prohibition on an unwilling public is a serious lesson for the world at large. One cannot force people to be moral by legislative Acts. These American fanatics, mostly the Methodists and Baptists, never dreamt what would follow in the wake of that stupid measure. Serious writers blame the Prohibition Act for the present state of America. As a matter of fact, unscrupulous men soon discovered that bootlegging, racking, and gangsterism were paying occupations while people secretly

craved for drink. It will take a long time before America is purged of those daring criminals which have turned some American cities, like Chicago and New York, into a veritable hell on earth. It is stated that these criminals, seeing the end of their profitable occupation with the end of the Prohibition Act, are now turning their attention to kidnapping. In all these sinister activities the Roman Catholics have played the leading part as most of the gangsters, bootleggers, racketeers and kidnappers of America are Italians and Irish—staunch Roman Catholics who are very particular about the practice of their religion.

* * *

In an article in "The Times of India" a writer described the superstition that prevails in South India about the connection which is believed to exist between children's illness and the Dumb Owl, locally called *Ooma-Kottan*. It would appear that all children's illnesses are attributed to the sinister influence. Diarrhoea, especially, is the manifestation of the evil doing of that bird. Many little lives are lost owing to the stupidity of the parents who would rather consult magicians than resort to scientific medical treatment when their little ones are seriously ill.

THE GIFT OF FREETHOUGHT*

Freethought is sometimes constructed as irrational thought, as thought that is, in the eyes of orthodox and ill-educated persons, contrary to established tenets and canons of logic as they conceive it to be. But a little deeper analysis of the question will show to all unprejudiced folk that it is not so, but that it is only the spontaneous expression of human 'Buddh' itself to establish its own supremacy over everything else in matters intellectual; the mere word, "established", will only be a fragile weapon to drive "Reason" out of the field or to scare it into submission or silence, as the tenacious camp of convention and tradition vainly imagines. No attractive or mystifying or question-begging phraseology from the sacred (?) stock in-trade of the orthodox people, coined ages back by well-meaning but crafty men of ancient wisdom, need frighten us into sealing our mouths against those who want to

intimidate us by high-sounding and jaw-breaking phraseologies and technicalities and thereby impose on us ideas and maxims that we cannot honestly believe in and adopt, looked at and studied from all possible angles and view-points. Some orthodox cranks even go the absurd length of seeing in 'freethought' a synonym for the blackest of sins (?) When a thing or an institution is said to be "established" and to be holy with a peculiar halo of its own, every sane man or woman has an inborn right to dig at its very foundations and to question, to question the very nature and character of the basis on which such an institution stands and also further to examine the nature of the circumstances that surrounded and governed the rise into being of the said institution; we have also the right, inborn with us, to study, scrutinise and to fearlessly criticise, wherever necessary in the interests of truth and

*(Continued from April 1933 Issue.)

sanity, the nature of the authorship thereof. If my friend Mr. Vision tells me that he has just seen a giant gymnast performing wonderful acrobatic feats in mid-air with no supports whatever, I am never, in order to uphold the sanity and courage and honesty of my own intellect, to take it for granted and accept it gleefully on trust, because he happens to be one of my bosom friends. My intellect should have its own path to travel and should refuse to be unreasonably or forcibly sidetracked into a dangerous side-line of thought and action. This side-line of thought may be dangerous, because it is unknown, strange and uninviting to me. Similarly, because the authors of a particular institution, leaving apart the question of its age, etc., may be our own ancestors or others of our own blood, we are never to approve of it and we are never bound either by any infallible moral maxim to do so, unless and until we are forced by some irresistible trend of logic to recognise it as a valuable monument to human wisdom and intellectual activity. It is, of course, far, far easier to tread the beaten tract than to think and strike out an independent line of our own. Though easier by far, the beaten track is possibly more perilous and more disastrous in the long run, why not and how not?

When my mother tells me that I should not think of starting on a journey South

on Thursdays or a journey North on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and similar vague things and threats (yes, it amounts to an indirect threat, isn't it?), I have only to exercise some patience with her and have to take it as a superstition, pure and simple, until I am convinced, if at all such conviction is possible, of its truth. At the same time, if I chance to be a little sagacious and really intelligent, caring more for true knowledge than for cock-and-bull tit-bits doled out and dispensed by aunts and grand-mothers, (I say this with the utmost respect to all those who are responsible for my appearance on earth as a human being) my mind will have been already set a-working on subjects similar to this and will have already gone exploring minutely all these cases of journeys that have been previously undertaken by men or women and immediate consequences thereof, if at all those consequences can be intelligibly connected with and attributed to the "inauspicious days" on which the journeys took place. This is not to browbeat and condemn mercilessly our ancient beliefs but it is only an anxiety to get at the stability or otherwise of their aged foundations. Can this be put down and branded off-hand as a "sin," or at least as a reprehensible habit of mind?

R. NATESA AIYAR.

(*To be continued.*)

RATIONALISM AND THE BHAGAVAD-GITA*

Naoha mam tani karmani nibadhnanti
Dhananjaya
Udasin ivadasina masaktam teshu
karmasu.
(Gita IX, 9.)

(I am not interested in the acts of creation &c., and am detached. Hence these do not bind me.)

When responsibility is expressly disavowed, it is idle to pursue the method of proving the existence of God from his supposed design. It is not merely an attempt to foist liability upon an innocent party; it is besides an offence against the principle of economy of thought that nothing ought to be presumed to exist whose presence is not absolutely necessary to explain the given facts. It is the fallacy in logic of presuming too much. The theist presumes to know too much, because he presumes that God is, that he knows that He is, and in most cases, he also presumes to know what He is, or what He is like, at least, what He is not, or cannot be. He may not be told where he is wrong, without offending his faith. Yet he proclaims that God is unknowable, and agrees that God defined is God dethroned. He presumes to comprehend what on his own admission is incomprehensible. There is no worse offender against God than the theist who exposes the place of hiding of the Brahman.

Prakritim swamavashtabhya visrujami
punah punah
Bhuta-grama mimam kritsnamavasam
prakritervasat
(Gita, IX, 8).

(Hidden in nature, which is mine own, I emanate often, the hosts of beings dependent, on nature itself).

God tries to walk under cover, the theist seeks to remove it. And if the attempt were to prove successful, it would injure Divinity in body, mind, reputation, and property. We, on the other hand, that are content with nature, Krishna's sister that successfully displaced him from the moment of birth, leave him alone in the *sanctum sanctorum* of Nanda's flock. Nature is the cause. The multitude of beings are helpless. Everywhere causality rules. Our acts are conditioned by nature as much as the movements of astronomical bodies. The recognition of causality is the beginning of allegiance to science. Let God's face ever remain hidden. Enough that the womb of the vast expanse of space-time is fast lending itself to experiment and dissection. The thoughts of men will one day be heard through an amplifier recording the chemical changes that accompany them in the brain. Psychology will ere long be a chapter in biology. 'Today one can run a needle into one's arm near a nerve, connected up through an amplifier with a loud speaker, and listen in to the nervous impulses going down from the brain to the hand when one voluntarily bends a finger.' It may become possible to observe, in the same kind of way, the same kind of processes associated with consciousness. When thought-processes come to be thus explained by their physical antecedents, God will hide his abode yet deeper. The scientist atheist is not concerned. He knows that the notion of a "first cause" is a thought-projection in the human mind. The absolute, the unconditioned, the creation, and the final end, are rooted in poetry, and what all is left for man

* Continued from page 11, November, 1933.

to live by is the manifested middle-state only (vyakta madhyani, Gita, II, 28). He leaves these absolute and directs his Yoga-practice to get in tune with the physical world. He knows that the Vedas, sacrifices, austerities and alms giving, are excelled by knowledge and knowing this he seeks to realise nature which is the primary seat in which he started.

Vedeshu yogneshu tapassucheiva
Deneshu yatpunyaphalam pradistam
Atyeti tatsarvamidam viditva
Yogi param sthanamupaiti chadyam
(Gita VIII, 28).

The atheist knows that the fruit of any earthly conduct in learning, ritual or charity should essentially remain earthly, and having realised this, he is firm (rock-seated, Kutastho, VI, 8) in his Yoga of scientific pursuit, in an effort at understanding the intricacies of evolution and of man's part therein. The true scientist is the Yogi who unravels the mystery of life and mind.

Yadhakasa sthitho nithyam vayussaravatra gomahan
Tatha sarvani bhutani matsthani-
tyupa dharaya (IX, 6)

(All beings are in me, as the mighty all-pervading atmosphere is associated with space.)

I am aware that Akasha (unoccupied space) is rendered by some as being Ether. But like God, the postulate of Ether has acquired already a conflicting acceptance among scientists. That is another illustration that science cannot afford to promise finalities, if it should remain alive and kicking. But a literal acceptance of this sloka does no violence to the standard of science if space-time is understood to be the background in which all beings are rooted.

The highest knowledge and the deepest secret is thus the realisation that there is no design in the universe, which is no court for special pleading. It has no axe to grind. Man is as much and no more its concern as any other tiny electronic discharge or the most slender photon or quantum of light, projected in the outermost limits of this expanding universe. Men that aspire for individual ideals however noble and laudable they may be are sure to find one day that the attainment of the object has ceased to sustain them in their emancipation. Those that set before them causes to work for will, no doubt, enjoy the bliss of Swarga. But there is a limit to such an objective. After a time this very bliss breeds a further yearning, and thus is the man involved in a succession of pursuits. (Cf. Slokas 20, 21 of Ch. IX). That is the evil accompanying the pursuit of concretely formulated schemes in regard to preconceived ends. The emancipation of a country through war, the enrichment of a state by inflated currency, the restraints on social life by well-defined conventions, these are some of the ways to temporary salvation by a sojourn in the Indraloka, (swarga, the abode of Indra). Their purpose gained, they revert to the human level, (Kshine punye martya lokam visanti, IX, 21, line, ii).

But the real Yogi, the scientist, is far above these temporal applications of his action (Karma). Beyond his craving for Gnana, knowledge, he has no concern for aught else.

Ananyaschintayanto mam yejanah
paryupasate
Tesham Nithyabhi yuktanam yoga
kshemaw vahananyaham
(Gita, IX, 22).

They who do not think of anything else, but concentrate on me, to them who are linked to truth, I deliver goods and preserve them.)

Knowledge is thus the source of acquisition of all resources, and the means of retaining them. But the acquisition and retention of these is not the objective of truth. The Yogi that devised them is left to search after other means when the (pleasure) Swargabhoga of their employment is finished. But the disinterested Yogi that blesses the whole world with a beneficent discovery enjoys a more lasting Mukti, emancipation. Such an one, though he be tainted with heterodox practice (Durachara) ought to be known as Sadhu (righteous); for, in his undistracted resolve, his prospective is liberation (Gita, IX, 30). Scientific truth, apart from all notions of design, personality and existence of God, is the Raja Vaidya, Raja Guhya, the Yoga of the kingly science, and kingly secret.

But the Gita has a policy. It does not countenance the indiscriminate enlightenment of the mass of humanity. Its sociology was obviously dependent upon the existing material. Earlier, (Ch. III, 26, and 29) it had prohibited the unsettlement of the practices of the unenlightened. On the other hand it went all the way to enjoin the observance of ritual by the Yogi himself, by rendering it more attractive, putting new life into it. That is a pointer to cultural evolution.

V.—The human document.

About Herbert Spencer, Mr. J. M. Robertson, in the book "Modern Humanists Reconsidered" (185) wrote that he (Spencer) "was always alive not only to

the fact of inertia, but to the danger of hasty change." Spencer and Comte were "people concerned to make it concretely clear that notions accepted as truth were delusions." but they "always set up in them a sense of the unpreparedness of the majority for new truth and for consequent change of action." (ibid, p 186.) The dictum that 'restrictions of every kind cannot last much longer than they are wanted, and cannot be destroyed much faster than they ought to be' inhibits the purposive making of any serious change. (Spencer's Essays, I, 114). "When it comes to attacking the concrete error, in the shape of beliefs demonstrably false or absurd, he (Spencer) is normally pulled up by his perception that there is a risk of going too fast; that unintelligent people need unintelligent beliefs" (Modern Humanists Reconsidered, p. 186). Such a social philosophy is the enemy of creative action. Further, in the case of Herbert Spencer it involved a self-contradiction in that he himself condemned "the profoundest of all infidelity—the fear lest the truth be bad." (Essays, I, p. 92.)

The teaching of the Gita, (II, 22 to 29) brings the divine revelation to the human level. Except to those that leave the meaning of those verses alone, and cling to the sanctity of their sound, an ordinary reading of the advice does not fail to impress the humanity of the document. Few beyond the pale of Roman Catholicism in the West, to-day believe that the Bible is literally the word of God, and true. Modernism has sent its arrows of criticism deep into the inmost recesses of revealed truth. The ages of composition of the various books comprising the same, as also the

competency of the respective authors to inspire confidence in their professions or infallibility, are now the objects of comparative study and learned judgment. It is futile to seek to exclude any literary production from similar treatment at the hands of the critical student on the ground of its superhuman origin. This is an era that presumes to assign dates for all events, including the birth of God, not merely the ages of his varied Words in several tongues. Their respective merits depends upon the service they render to humanity, past or future. Viewed in this sense the teaching of the Gita, referred to, is doubly human, all divine pretensions apart. In its concern for maintaining the ignorant in their own bliss, it seeks to shield them from all disturbance. And secondly, in advocating caution lest an all-too-sudden disruption of preconceptions in the general mind may tend towards danger, there is involved the recognition of the inability to meet it when it does occur.

Yadipyaham na varteyam jatukar-
manyatandritah
Mama vartanuvartante manushya
Partha sarvasah. (Gita, III, 23)

(For O, Partha, if I were to neglect action, all men will imitate my neglect similarly.) Why may not the Almighty cease performing all Karma, or action, and yet prevent mankind from following his method? Is human nature perverse beyond His control?

Utsedeyurimeloka nakuryam karma
chedaham
Samkarasya cha kartasya mupahanyami
mah prajah. (III, 24.)

(Were I to cease action, the worlds go to ruin. Confusion would ensue. I would be destroying the people.) It is a confession of utter powerlessness to prevent

the consequences. If action even on the part of Omnipotence is necessary to avoid chaos, it is a recognition on His part of the fundamental importance of causality, which is the corner-stone of science. Action and the result of action, and thus the two indispensable, binding alike the wise man and the fool.

Saktah karmanya vidvamso yada
kurvanti Bharata
Kurbadvidvam statha saktah chikir-
shur loka samgraham. (III, 25)

(Thus, O, Bharata, the wise perform action even as the otherwise, bent on the welfare of the world; but the former are unattached.) Is this not the gospel of the 'profoundest infidelity' based on the fear that the truth may taste unpalatable to the majority? The gospel of compromise does not transcend the limits of human expediency. Policy is the way of dodging truth. It is perhaps wise to counsel thus, but withal it is after the grandmotherly way of nervous feeling for safety. The injection not to unsettle the ignorant people attached to action is carried to excess in verse 29.

Prakriter guna samudhah sajante guna
karmasu
Na sakritsna vido mandan kritsna
Vinna vichalayet:

(Those ensnared by the qualities of nature desire the functioning of those qualities. Such stupid fools ought not to be disturbed by wisdom.) Viewed from the ethical point, it amounts to saying that even those that are given to sensual pleasure ought not to be approached to acquaint them with the knowledge of their real character, and the consequences that may result from their wonted pursuits. That is not a standard of morality in the least complimentary to the author. If we

are to place any value upon its teaching, it is not in the direction of its tenour apparent in this portion of the discourse.

Speaking about Charles Bradlaugh, in the Centenary Celebration at Glasgow, Professor Harold J. Laski said "He told the truth fearlessly to those to whom it was supposed by the ruling classes to be a dangerous commodity. That was real emancipation—to bring truth to the masses, from whom its entrance was jealously safeguarded." (Literary Guide, London, Nov. 1933, P. 205). The spread of knowledge is the highest duty of the wise, and the inalienable right of the ignorant which no text may countermand. Elsewhere, the Gita has unequivocally praised Gnana, and indicated the means of attaining it. Its tenderness for ignorance is based on the one hand by fear of consequences and on the other upon the supreme need for tolerance toward every section of the community. Our judgments as to wisdom are after all relative. Knowledge is the process of growth, wherein the degrees reached are seldom, if at all, indelibly marked. The borderland between science and superstition is yet hazy, and it would be presuming too much to judge belief merely by its general acceptance. Evolution is a slow imperceptible process, and toleration dictates caution in the matter of social reconstruction. Those who understand by the Gita that it advocates conformity at all costs miss its real spirit of reform, whose gradual unfoldment it recognised. For in VI, 44, it is promised that even the desire to attain knowledge (Jigra-surapi) takes a man beyond scriptural authority. (Sabda brahmati vartate.) And even a little of this knowledge protects from great fear.

Nehabhi krama nasosti pratyava
navidyate
Swalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate
mahate bhayat.
(Gita, II, 40.)

(In this, no action may be lost without result, nor is there any impediment. The slightest Dharma removes the giant fear.) Such is the express teaching of the Gita that enjoins creative, conscious, activity on the part of the enlightened, who remain detached from the fruit of action.

If the Gita, has a policy, that policy is itself evidence of its humanity. Ingersoll's Creed of Science is its echo. "Do the best that can be done, and then be resigned—this is the Religion of Reason and the creed of science. This satisfies the brain and the heart."

VI. Individualism.

The emphasis led on tolerance in the Hindu religious thought is seldom paralleled in history. Not a little is the contribution of the Gita in that regard. 'Sarva bhuta hite ratah', those that have the concern for the well-being of all creatures, and 'Nirvairassarva bhuteshu' those that are not inimical or ill-disposed towards any creature attain the ideal. (Gita, V, 25, XII, 4, and XI, 55). God is not the leader of any party. He has no opposition bench to placate or subdue,

Samoham sarva bhuteshu na me
dveshyesthi na priyah, (IX 29)

(The same am I to all beings; none that is hateful to me, nor beloved) And to make the want of preference still more explicit, reference is made in the next sloka to the sinner, the heterodox, non-conformist.

Api chetsu durachare bhajate mam
ananyabhak (IX, 30)

(Even if the most sinful worship me, with undivided heart he too is saved). As if to carry salvation out of doors, it is declared that devotees of other cults are in effect His own worshippers.

Yepyanya devata bhakta yajanti
sraddhyanvitah
Tepi mameva Kaunteya yajantyavidhi
Purvakam
(Gita, IX, 23).

(Those that worship in earnest other deities, those too, O, Kaunteya, are my worshippers, though not conforming to the rule.)

This is a healthy extension of patronage, the spread of a mantle over those that profess alien creeds, and own allegiance to strange cults. Much in contrast from the jealousy of Jehovah, Krishna plays the soft flute of sympathetic attraction. You may be worshipping a thousand and one other gods, but all the time you are only worshipping me. Your fancied differences do not count. "For I am everything: the sun, moon, atmosphere, the ocean, the highest mountain, Siva, Jupiter, Aum, the superlative individual in every category of being; (X, 20-39) and there is nothing, moving or immoveable, that may exist that is not me." Na tadasti vina yatsyarmaya bhutam characharam, (X, 39).

This inclusive spirit is the redeeming feature peculiar to Hindu theology. Of course all cults within Hinduism have imbibed this happy idea of the identity of their peculiar Godheads with the objects of reverence of other cults with which history has contrived to associate them. The Semitic religions of the West that began in jealousy and spread themselves through the sword maintain their peculiar integrity. They illustrate that

monotheism is not incompatible with intolerance. Allegiance to one God is no guarantee of peace among men. Christian priests blessed contending parties during the war 1914-1918. It is needless to dig up memories of conflicts among differing faiths, and among divisions in the same faith. In India, faith that was softened by dilution in metaphysical doctrine, has served to round off the corners of fanatical exaggeration; God here is an elastic symbol oscillating between existence and non-existence, *Sat* and *Asat*; at any rate, an overestimated importance of any of the prevalent cults is not the legacy of history to Hinduism. The barometer-reading of free-thought within the fold here may not compare unfavourably with its presence elsewhere. Once again we turn to Buddhism that left its impress on the trend of the Vedanta. We enjoy its legacy though we have taken care to avoid its memory within geographical bounds. We are the inheritors of a culture that looked to individual liberty for individual emancipation, called Siddhi, Moksha, Brahmanirvanam, or by whatever name. India is the land of the religiously free, paradoxical though it be.

Turning to Europe, the lesson of intolerance is manifest everywhere. "It is not accident to-day that, under the despotisms of Europe, the tyrants fear none so much as those who still retain a lingering faith in the cleansing power of the free-mind. It is no accident either that they are compelled to equate doubt with disloyalty, and that for them no offence is so grave as the analysis of foundations." (Prof. H. J. Laski, in the Rationalist Annual, 1934, P. 7). "Hitler Mussolini, Stalin-these write of heterodox opinion in the same temper as Calvin did nearly 400 years ago." (Ibid. p. 5).

They equate difference of ideas with sin. Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom, and the social obligation of the Rationalists, according to him, lay in affirming the victory of free thought each day of our lives. Individual liberty has no place in the Nazi, Fascist, or Communist dispensation. They threaten to re-enact the Mahabharat once again, so fundamental is their difference, and so virulent is their antagonism to the recognition of the status of unitary life; so precipitate in method, as meteoric in their origins. Germany, Italy and Russia fill the European sky to-day, that the influence of France about a hundred years ago on John Stuart Mill is brought to mind. It, by the way, illustrates the total change of outlook effected in the same mind by progressive ratiocination. In 1851, Mill was supporting revolution and not reform. "Instead of thinking" he wrote that "strength and durability are the result only of a slow and peaceful development, I think, that changes effected rapidly and by force are often the only once which would in given circumstances be permanent." (Letters of J. S. Mill, I, P. 162.) He did not then appreciate the idea that 'reforms to be salutary must be graduated to the average moral and intellectual growth of the community.' He vehemently protested that if it were to prevail "the stupidity and habitual indifference of the mass of mankind would bear down by its dead weight all the efforts of the more intelligent and active-minded few." That was the period when Mill was guided by Carlyle whose passionate attitude towards the French revolutions clouded the former's vision.

Mill's Essay on Liberty was his later production. In that he "could not avoid laying down principles which bar alike autocratic and factional revolutions."

(Modern Humanists Reconsidered, by J. M. Robertson, P. 157). His faith in the virtue of reason and the virtue of freedom has a dynamic influence which seeks "not to dominate and hypnotize, to overawe by declamation or derision, but to enlist men for justice and reciprocity by arousing in them the fullest play of their own critical faculty." (Ibid. P. 158). It is "a plea for liberty and a landmark in the history of free-thought."

Manushyanam sahasreshu kaschidya-
tati siddhaye

Yatatamapi siddhanam kaschinmam
vetti tattvatah,

(Gita, VII, 3.)

(Out of the thousands of men, scarcely anybody attempts to attain the ideal. And of those that do strive, scarce one really attains.) It is obvious that for the ascertainment of that infinitesimal minority of the enlightened, an atmosphere of perfect freedom is essential. Growth is hampered under conditions of stereotyped factory-breeding, that tends to prune down the higher stems. The inertia of the mass may have its use. But the one-in-the-thousands is its living cell. However much the striving for unsettlement, the specific gravity of the mass outweighs abruptness. The social scientist may only affect the material which responds to his experiment. And in so far as it does, thus far does evolution march.

Yadyad vibhuti matsatvam
srimadurjita mevava

Tattadevava gachatvam mama
tejomsa sambhavam,

(Gita, X, 41.)

(Everything that is glorious, good beautiful, and great learn thou that it, proceeds from a ray of my light.) Nature evolved man. Man revolutionizes nature, by his greatness and glory. Who can deny to any individual the freedom that nature gives?

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

GOD AND FUTURE LIFE ARE ILLUSIONS

[The following letter revealing in a poignant manner the inner struggle of Lala Lajpat Rai was addressed to Mr. G. D. Birla. It was first printed in "The People" of Lahore.]

I am sick of life, both mentally and physically. I suppose the one leads to the other. I have no zest left in me, no go, no desire. Whenever anyone asks me to do anything or whenever I think of doing something, the invariable question that comes out from the depth of my mind is—"Oh, what is the good?" Is there any good in this world? Is it worth all the trouble one takes over it? Is it not all vanity? The fact is I have lost faith in everything—in myself, in God, in Humanity, in life, in the world. Nothing seems to be real or tangible. Everything seems to be ephemeral and the outcome of human vanity. All my life I have fought and struggled against this doctrine—I have thundered from hundreds of platforms that the doctrine which says "this world is a farce, unreal, imaginary (?) and a delusion," is false and immoral. In hundreds of articles, written for the press, I have denounced the teaching of neo-Vedanta which calls the world and the life in it a delusion and an unreality—yet to-day in the evening of my life I find myself confronted with the same view. It is a curious frame of mind undefinable, inexpressible in language, yet as real as anything can be. I have reached a stage when all activities, public or private, all desires, all emotions seem to be nothing but vanity, the offshoots of vanity, the developments of vanity. Life is real, life is earnest, seems to me to be nothing more than the cry of unconscious vanity. What is there in

life which is real and which one should take in earnest. Are the relations of life real and earnest. No! Have I not seen the nearest, the dearest, the most intimate relations of life, broken into pieces, like a piece of dry, rotten wood. There was a time in life when one built a great deal on these relations. One thought life without them was impossible. One worked hard, laboured incessantly, did all kind of things, moral and sometimes immoral too, put up with all kinds of discomforts and inconveniences to keep up these relations—to meet the wants, the wishes, the desires of those whom one loved, one earned money for them, spent it on them, saved it for them and did all sorts of things to be useful to them, to serve them. But then the times changed. All these *relations went on the dung-hill*. They went astray. They changed and I also changed. Now they mean nothing to me and I nothing to them. Why? The question has no answer. If it is true of the nearest and dearest relationships of the world—connections by blood and marriage—is it not equally true of the friendships of the world. Where are the friendships of my childhood, of my youth and of my middle age? Where are the friends for whom I contracted the deepest affection, whom I thought were real disinterested friends and loved me for my own sake—whom I considered it my duty to serve and sacrifice for—for whom I undertook the greatest risks and for whose sake I allowed myself to be misunderstood and misrepresented? Where are they? Cast to the winds. I do not care for them and they do not care for me. Some of them are dead but others are alive. I never hear from them, never

care to hear from them and vice-versa. Was there any real foundation for these friendships—were they based on selfishness or were they based on vanity. It is difficult to answer. Take the case of colleagues in public life. Is not what is said about relatives and friends alive, equally true of them too. There was a time when I believed in God who heard prayers, rewarded us for our good deeds and punished us for bad ones. Slowly, gradually, but most assuredly, that belief is gone. How can I believe in a God who is said to be just, benevolent, almighty and omniscient, who rules over this absurd world. Can this world be the handiwork of a beneficent force—of a just, merciful and benevolent force. Can this world, full of injustices, inequalities, cruelties and barbarities, be the handiwork of a good God while hundreds and thousands of wicked people, people without brains, without a head or heart, immoral, and cruel people, tyrants, oppressors, exploiters and selfish people, are living in luxury and in every possible way insulting, trampling under foot, grinding into dust and also mocking their victims; these latter are living lives of untold misery, degradation, disgrace, of sheer want. They do not get even the necessities of life. Why all this inequality? Can this be the handiwork of a Just and a True God. I know the reply which all theologians, and believers give. I myself have indulged in these platitudes thousands of times. But the truth is that there is no satisfactory reply to that question. In the light of science one cannot honestly believe in a Creator or in a Maker or in a Personal God. Yes, I can understand the reply of a Herbert Spencer. There must be an unknown and unknowable force behind all this manifestation of life which is the Primal Cause.

But that is not a Personal God who hears prayers and whom people call upon in their troubles and thank in their triumphs and successes. What's fate, and what's God? Often when a person calls upon his God to hear his prayer or to do something for him, I am inclined to shout "Stop this tomfoolery. Where is thy God, I can find no trace of him in this absurd world." The world is great but it is absurd. It is magnificent but it is not moral, at least not moral in the sense in which we understand it. It is no place for justice or mercy or kindness or benevolence. It is wonderful but is a mystery. It is open yet it is a riddle which no one has been able to solve so far. You can't make head or tail of it. It is full of inconsistencies, incompatibilities, intangibilities, contradictions and what seem to an honest observer, lies. What is truth, and where is it? Is there any truth in the religions, or in creeds or in faiths? Are not those who say they have discovered truth labouring under a delusion or under a sense of vanity? Did Mahatma, Budha, or Christ or Mahomet discover truths? If so, where are these "truths"; why have those "truths" been distorted? Why have they disunited mankind and divided them into factions, parties and so on? Does truth lead to disruption, disintegration and disunion? Is it possible that all these good men were labouring under a sense of unconscious vanity and unthought of conceit? The short and long of it is that I have lost all faith in God or in religion. This world, this wretched world, this warring world, this absurd world is certainly real in the sense that it exists before your eyes. You cannot deny its existence; nor its reality in this sense. But you cannot find its why? wherefore? whereto? All that is a mystery which is not given to man to

unfold, however much he may try. All the explanations and solutions so far pro-
 founded are flat and stale. They do not
 satisfy my intellect. Yet all this scepti-
 cism, agnosticism or blasphemy, if you
 like to call it, does not lead me to a belief
 in epicurianism. What are the casual
 pleasures of life—those of the senses,
 are they real, certainly not. They are as
 much unreal as anything else. Do they
 lead to happiness or satisfaction. Cer-
 tainly not. They constitute the greatest
 delusion of life. I do sometimes feel a
 hankering for the luxuries of life, but when
 I have got them, I feel that I have been
 guilty of a crime. My conscience begins to
 bite me. A belief in God and in future
 life is said to be the foundation of mora-
 lity. I have not yet lost all faith in
 future life but the future life of the soul
 in the shape of rewards for good deeds
 and punishment for bad deeds, does not
 appeal to my intellect. There may be
 some kind of future life but a future life
 based on the theory of rewards and
 punishments is a grotesque idea. Once
 upon a time I believed in it. But now I
 think this theory of rewards for good
 deeds and punishments for bad deeds is
 very much responsible for the rotten
 condition of the Hindus. If being an
 untouchable and a **chandal** is a punish-
 ment for past bad deed, what justification
 remains there for the untouchables etc.
 to rebel against society. They have got
 what they deserved. The Sanatanists
 are perfectly logical. If the poor star-
 ving humanity to-day is poor because it
 had done bad deeds in the previous birth,
 why, they deserve all they suffer from
 and in suffering with patience and
 without complaints lies their salvation.
 This is a doctrine against which the
 whole of my soul, intellect and reason
 revolts. I can not accept such a doctrine.

Belief in God and in future life are then
 very poor foundations for morality. Mo-
 rality must stand or fall on its merits.
 What are the merits? The question
 again is very perplexing. Is there any-
 thing like absolute morality; the standard
 of morality differs in different countries.
 Why then morality cannot be absolute.
 But I did not start to write a treatise on
 morality. My object was to explain why
 my doubt in the existence of God and in
 a future life do not lead me to a life of
 luxuries or to a life of immorality. You
 may well ask me why then I have been
 in public life so often. The answer is
 "purely for selfish reason"—to satisfy
 my hankering for action, or from a habit
 of mind. I have deeply felt the degrada-
 tion of my country and the humiliation of
 my countrymen. That has stirred me to
 action. In action alone I thought I could
 get any relief. The injustice of the situa-
 tion, the miseries of my countrymen, have
 sunk deep in my soul. They have made
 an impression which is ineffectable. They
 haunt me day and night. They have made
 my life miserable. From that misery
 I took refuge in action. People often com-
 plain that my writings and speeches are
 very bitter, very satirical and very biting.
 Yes, they have to be so because they are
 the true expression of my inner self—my
 inner self is very sore, very bitter very
The sense of injustice, humilia-
 tion and misery overwhelms me. I found
 relief in expresion, in work, in action and
 even in taking risks. I don't seek risks
 but the whole weight of my inner feeling
 leads me to it irresistibly. I am not a brave
 man by nature but the intensity of my
 feeling within has made me brave risks and
 dangers. Early in life I found that there
 was no happiness for me, but there was
 some satisfaction in work and in action
 and in expression. So I acted on that

impulse and on the dictum of the Upanishad "**Kurwanneva Karmani**" etc. etc., but the disappointments and disillusionments of public life, the demoralization that prevails all round civilization and chichanery which are the order of the day in public men, have so disgusted and irritated me that whatever little pleasure and satisfaction I did get from public activities has gone. I am in a positively perplexing state of mind. I do not want to engage in public activities; yet I cannot abstain from them. I hate making speeches yet I cannot altogether retire and resist invitations, though after every speech I ask myself, "Oh, what was the good." I hate public applause, I hate crowds, yet I cannot say I am indifferent to it. I am often lonely. I do not like loneliness, yet I do not feel any happier in company. I seek company,

yet after the company is gone I feel thankful for having got rid of it. Nothing satisfies me, I know the habit of too much analysis, of tearing things into pieces is bad. It does not lead to pleasantness, yet I often find myself in a hypercritical mood. No one comes up to my ideals. I admired Gandhiji. I admire Malaviyaji, but I often find myself indulging in bitter criticism of them. Public life, public activities, public engagements are no longer alluring; they do not attract me, they do not please me, yet I find I cannot live without them. Oh! What am I to do—I am miserable, I am lonely, I am unhappy, yet I hug my miserableness, my loneliness and my unhappiness, I do want to get rid of this state of mind but I don't know how.

LALA LAJPATRAI.

THE WRONG LEADER.

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, J. Ramsay MacDonald, was once rather closely in touch with a non-theological group of social pioneers who carried on the Ethical Movement, and it was in that connexion that I first met him, about 1897. The ladder that he has since climbed has raised him nearer to orthodoxy, for he attends church, and perhaps consults God on political programmes. Such being his attitude in 1933, he may feel quite at home with theology when he receives (in November) a deputation which will urge a speedier approach to international Disarmament. This anti-war object is excellent. I have supported the aims of the Society (League) of Nations even since 1919,—a time when, so far as I then observed,

Mr. MacDonald did not display a very warm interest in the foundation of the League.

But I have never felt pleasure in seeing the Christian churches or its Jewish synagogues take up the Peace Cause as if it was their special province. The Jewish part of the Bible smells of blood and war-dust. The Christian part of the Bible ends with horrible curses and battle-scenes planned by God as a punishment for the people who thwarted his heavenly administration. Certainly it would be good to behold Jews and Christians in repentance for the errors of their past, and humbly following in the rear of a deputation. But they do not adopt this attitude of humility. The deputation (so

the journals say) will be led by the Archbishop of Canterbury. He is the wrong leader. After this wretchedly misplaced gentleman will come representatives of Literature (Prof. Gilbert Murray etc.), of Science, Industry, and Education; and lastly, workers in the Peace Movement, such as Lord Cecil and Dr. G. P. Gooch. The arrangement insults the Peace Movement, and is disrespectful to Education and Literature.

In 1932, I expressed satisfaction, in the pages of *Reason*, at the absence of priestly creeds and theological elements from the procedure of the League of Nations. In the League's annual Assembly at Geneva, the delegates of the nations would not dream of placing a Pope, or an Archbishop, or a Rabbi, or a Salvationist at the head of any Committee or Bureau, or of inviting a cleric to preach

to the representatives of the nearly sixty countries.

I do not suppose Mr. MacDonald has any objection to the antiquated custom of bowing to the priests as captains of the social system of Britain. Yet the custom gives the lie to the facts of our civil and political order and progress. I have been personally interested in British economics and politics since 18800, I have rejoiced to see many advances in education, in freedom, in the material condition of the people, in more just and considerable administration of the diversified territories controlled by our Commonwealth. But the Churches led none of these advances.

FREDERICK J. GOULD.

*Armcorel, Woodfield Avenue, Ealing,
London, November 1933.*

IS THE BIBLE FIT FOR CHILDREN TO READ?

[It will be interesting to know what the Revd. Mr. Hugh Redwood will have to say against Professor Julian Huxley's common sense opinion about the teaching of the Bible to children. In Protestant countries the Bible is held as a fetish book and it is no exaggeration to say that it is worshipped by millions who take it to be the "Word of God". As Prof. Huxley says, and as many others have said, there are passages in the Bible which, if found in any other book, would never be allowed to be read by children and half educated people.

The irony of it is that many learned Church men in Protestant countries do not believe all what is written in the Bible. They would laugh to scorn any one who takes all the myths and fables in it to be literally true. They know that it is a composite publication recording vicissitudes of the history of the Israelites from a time when they were just emerging from a state of barbarism. They know that it is a record of oriental fables which the Israelites, themselves, learnt from the Egyptians and the Babylonians and that Jehovah is the name of their tribal God, just as Moloch was that of the Canaanites. They know that the story of Creation, the Deluge, the sojourn in the Libyan desert, the passage of the Red Sea, etc., are not historical facts and that no serious student in these days credit these things. Yet, they teach these things to children as if they were real facts. They know that the

accounts of the lives, manners and morality of many of the prominent personages that figure in that Book would disgrace modern civilization, and they themselves would be horribly shocked if people nowadays were to behave like Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Saul and other Biblical worthies. They know that Jehovah was a god not worth admiring, and not one of them would associate the character of Jehovah with the God of Love and Mercy that they profess to believe in now. Yet helpless children are forcibly crammed of these things, filling their little minds with fantastic notions of the deity, the universe and the destiny of men. In other words, the teaching of the Bible to children is the best thing to pollute their imagination and to sow the seed of deep rooted superstitions in their plastic mind which will be very difficult to uproot in years to come.

Ed. REASON.]

Lord Raglan recently, in an address to the Society of Friends, expressed the belief that we ought to revise our religious teaching. For, he continued, "this at present involves holding up to the very young as pattern of morality such monsters of cruelty as Moses, Joshua, Samuel and David, whose atrocities, translated into plain English, exceed anything that was alleged against our enemies in the last war."

Such statements have prompted people to ask whether the Bible is fit for children to read, or at least whether it is advisable to make it the keystone of religious instruction for children.

Of course Lord Raglan might have added to his list such consummate practitioners of deceit as Jacob, such patterns of intolerance as many of the kings and prophets, polygamists like Abraham, teachers like St. Paul who held a low and to many people a degrading view of marriage, and in conclusion, such very narrow-minded, jealous and cruel divinities as the earlier Jehovah.

The Spirit of the Leader.

Others, in attempting to answer the question whether the Bible is fit for children to read might point out that it contains much that is shocking to most

people's ideas of sexual morality, that it is often in flat contradiction to much of our modern knowledge about the universe and man's position in it, and that if presented as the Word of God in any literal sense, it is extremely confusing to the young mind, since different parts of it are entirely inconsistent with each other in their outlook on the facts of nature, on individual conduct and morality, and on man's duty to society.

However, the question, "Should children be allowed to read the Bible?" seems to me to be wrongly put. It is not the mere fact of reading a book that matters, but how you read it—what background you bring to it, what is the framework of ideas in which your elders and teachers set it for you.

Personally, I should be extremely sorry to see a knowledge of the Bible die out among large sections of our population.

For one thing, there are so many biblical incidents, so many biblical characters, that have been woven into the texture of our national heritage of ideas. For another, some of the books of the Bible are magnificent literature. And finally, as a record of one of the most important phases in man's struggle

towards religious progress, the Bible is intensely valuable.

To the last point I shall return. Meanwhile, however, let me say on the other side that I do regard the unintelligent use of the Bible in religious teaching as fraught with the gravest possibilities of harm. In the first place, to regard the Bible as something perfect and final, in an entirely different category from any other book, is to me simply superstition.

The Old Testament is full of denunciations of the worship of graven images. The Protestant Christian sects inveigh against the Catholic tendencies to the worship of the Saints and the Virgin. But it is just as bad to set up a book to worship as it is to set up a graven image to worship; and Bibliolatry is no different in principle from Mariolatry.

There are many people that look down on the fetish-worship of savages who as a matter of fact are making a fetish of the Bible, with extremely similar results (allowing for the different level of civilisation at which they live) on their mental and spiritual outlook.

It is when children are taught that the Bible is literally inspired, and that it is the only avenue to their religious salvation which they need study, that the reading of it becomes undesirable for them.

Either they swallow it whole and carry on with their mind organised into watertight compartments, one for the Bible and religion, another for the life around them; or they become a prey to conflict, trying to reconcile the irreconcilable, deeply puzzled as to how to fit the facts and ideas they have gleaned from the Bible, which they have been told are divinely inspired or at least in a different

and superior category of authority and holiness from all others, into some relation with the facts and ideas at the basis of our modern civilisation and outlook that they imbibe as they grow up. This country is full of people suffering from the effects of such conflicts.

If, however, the Bible is used to illustrate the idea which is, I suppose, more basic than any other in the twentieth-century outlook, the idea which springs directly out of our acceptance of the fact of evolution and asserts that change is the inevitable fate of all human ideas and institutions, and that progressive development in them should be our constant aim, why, then, difficulties of the sort felt by Lord Raglan disappear.

Once you accept that there can and should be progress in morality and in religion, the Bible becomes the most interesting and the most helpful of all the world's sacred books, for the very reason that, to a greater extent than any of the others, it is the record, over a space of more than three thousand years, of just such a development.

Phases of Evolution.

Looked at from this point of view, the cruelty and intolerance of many Old Testament characters are only what is to be expected from a tribal people in an early and barbaric stage of its development, when war was its inevitable destiny. Not only that, but the fact that other ideals raised their heads in this same tribe and gradually ousted the old savage ideals, is an inspiring instance of real progress in the moral and religious field.

A study of the change in the character of Jehovah as it is represented in books

of different date in the Old Testament is a similar proof of the fact of religious progress.

Our own Shortcomings.

This point of view in religious teaching has, of course, an important corollary. It is that if religious progress was possible and desirable in the past, it is equally possible and equally desirable in the present. We to-day fall short of the ideal of living, and fall short just as radically—relatively to our circum-

stances and the state of our civilisation—as did the early Jews relatively to theirs.

If the Bible is used to illustrate the fact of moral and religious progress in the past and to point the way to the possibility of moral and religious progress in the future, it is an admirable instrument of religious instruction; but if it is used as an object of worship or as in any way a fetish in the realm of ideas, then indeed it is not fit for children to read.

From the News Chronicle.

MENDACIOUS PROPAGANDA.

To what ridiculous extremes cow-protectionists will go is illustrated by a 2-page story (or whatever it may be) by one Mr. Chinchliker B. A. (Hon.) in a Marathi monthly which considers itself respectable, purporting to show how a Hindu youth tries to kiss a Mahomedan girl, but draws back horrified at the unbearable stench issuing from her mouth, to the great astonishment of the girl who was awaiting the kiss! As the story starts with the contrast that he drank cow's milk while she ate the cow, the intention of the author is obvious. The author either thinks that lying is allowed in a good cause, or he believes the ridiculous statement that all except Jains, Buddhists and Hindus suffer from

bad breath because they eat beef. One wonders whether he really tried to kiss a Mahomedan girl and found a bad smell himself or, not having tried it, got the bad smell from his brain! In either case, such stupendous ignorance of logic in a B. A. (Hon.) is a disgrace to the University which gave him the degree. The editor has thought it worth while to illustrate this nonsense in picture. It might have occurred to the author that if his insinuation was true, no Hindu-Mahomedan marriages would have been possible, and he must surely have heard of some.

R. D. KARVE.